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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a Rapid Feedback Evaluation focused on 1) policy questions raised by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) concerning its Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) program, and 2) future ARC strategies for evaluating and monitoring RESAs. RESAs are organizations established to provide a range of educational services on a regional basis by combining some of the educational resources flowing to existing agencies. Funds for RESAs may come from federal, state, or local sources, but in all cases they come through existing agencies; RESAs do not have the authority to levy taxes. Chapter 1 briefly describes the Rapid Feedback Evaluation process and describes the organization of the report. Chapters 2-6 discuss the extent to which RESAs improve the quality and quantity of available educational services, the extent to which otherwise unavailable programs are provided by combining local funds through RESAs, the extent of cost savings realized through RESAs, the extent of specialized student services provided through RESAs, and the extent to which RESAs assist local districts in obtaining federal funds. Chapter 7 examines factors and conditions that influence the impact and effectiveness of RESAs, and chapter 8 discusses possible strategies for the ARC to use in monitoring and evaluating the RESA programs it funds. (JG)

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Supporting Analyses for an Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Service Agencies Program

by

John D. Waller
Dona M. Kemp
John W. Scanlon

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THE URBAN INSTITUTE
2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20037

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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present the results of a Rapid Feedback Evaluation (RFE) as they apply to:

- policy questions that have been raised by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) concerning the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) program, and
- future ARC strategies for the evaluation and monitoring of RESAs.

The rapid feedback evaluation is a technique developed by The Urban Institute to identify and utilize information that can be obtained readily from existing data on program operations and personal experiences to answer management questions.

A. WHAT A RAPID FEEDBACK EVALUATION INVOLVES

The RFE involves a series of reviews of available documentation, interviews and surveys. Each iteration is aimed at refining the answers to questions that have been posed by policy makers until only small increases can be made in the state of knowledge without extensive data collection efforts or program redesign.

For this study, the RFE has involved seven major steps divided into two phases. The first phase involved:

- An initial telephone survey of all RESA directors to identify activities, objectives and available information.
- Interviews of ARC personnel to develop a rhetorical description of the RESA program and an understanding of management systems and information needs for the program.
- Review of documentation obtained through the first two steps.

The product of the first phase was a rhetorical model and an evaluable model of the program. The rhetorical model presented the major components and hypotheses of the program. The evaluable model identified those parts of the rhetorical model that could be evaluated, and presented candidate measures and analyses for the evaluation. The evaluable model provided the basis for the subsequent collection and analysis of information on the RESA program.[1]

For the second phase of the study, effort was focused on a sample of RESAs and RESA activities which were selected as representative of the program, and provided a base for developing answers to questions posed by ARC. The major components of the second phase were:

- Site visits to 11 RESAs to review available documentation and conduct interviews. This permitted an assessment of the quality of the available data, development of first-hand knowledge of the RESA, its method of operation and its activities, and the feasibility and value of obtaining more data or conducting various experimental design types of evaluation.
- Second telephone survey of RESAs to verify certain information, attempt to fill some information gaps, and identify cases where more detailed information could be obtained on selected types of projects.

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[1] See John D. Waller, Barbara House and Dona M. Kemp. "Plan for the Evaluation of Regional Education Service Agencies," Paper 5048-1, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, October 15, 1975, and John D. Waller, Dona M. Kemp and Barbara House. "Summary of the Plan for the Evaluation of Regional Education Service Agencies," Paper 5048-2, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, November 26, 1975.

- Follow-up telephone interview of RESAs with cooperative purchase programs to obtain additional information on methods of operation, costs and cost savings.
- Telephone interviews of superintendents of local school districts located in the regions of the 11 visited RESAs to obtain independent assessments on their involvement in, cost and value of the RESA.

The products of the second phase are the interim RFE report which focused on the method of operation of the RESAs,[1] and this report which focuses on the policy questions ARC raised about the activities of RESAs.

The rapid feedback process is displayed in Table 1 as it was utilized to obtain information on RESA performance in serving as a means for local school districts to take advantage of economies of scale and achieve cost savings in the provision of educational services. It is discussed here as an example of how the process is used in studying a program such as ARC's RESA program. The purpose of the first phase of the rapid feedback process was to determine the extent to which cost savings was an objective of RESAs and identify whether RESAs were involved in activities to achieve cost savings. On the basis of information obtained during the first phase, a preliminary list of programs that might provide evidence of this type of RESA performance was developed and plans for data collection and analysis were formulated.

During the second phase, more specific information was obtained on programs in order to: determine the amount and type of evidence that existed on cost savings and obtain a complete listing of all programs attempting to take advantage of economies of scale to reduce the cost of educational services. In this process it was determined that the

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[1] See Dona M. Kemp, John D. Waller and John W. Scanlon. "Report on Regional Education Service Agencies in Appalachia," Paper 5048-3-02, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, August 5, 1976.

Activity	Purpose	Finding	Result
PHASE I			
o Initial telephone survey of 23 RESA directors and interviews with ARC personnel.	o To determine the objectives of RESAs and the programs they operate, identify programs operated by RESAs, and estimate the type of benefits that had been realized from their programs.	o Very few identify cost savings as a benefit and even fewer identified economies of scale programs.	o Begin to identify economies of scale programs.
o Review documentation provided by RESA directors and sample of documentation from ARC files.	o To find additional cost savings or economies of scale programs. o To see what documentation exists on those programs.	o Reinforced original finding. o Very little documentation available on program benefits.	o Selected 11 RESAs to visit.
PHASE II			
o Visits to 11 RESAs.	o To collect information on programs identified as economies of scale. o To identify additional economies of scale programs.	o Few additional programs identified. o Some documentation on actual savings realized was available. o Majority of economy of scale programs involve cooperative purchase of supplies.	o Documentation collected on cost savings in economies of scale programs.
o Telephone survey of 23 RESA directors.	o To finalize list of cooperative purchasing programs.	o Verified data previously collected. o Identified few new economies of scale programs.	o Arrangements made to call for additional information on cooperative purchasing programs.
o Telephone survey of sample of superintendents in the 11 RESAs visited.	o To identify programs that result in cost savings.	o Found no additional programs. o Ambiguity in definition of cost savings.	o Confirmation of previously completed list of economies of scale programs.
o Telephone calls to 9 RESAs.	o To collect information on cost savings in cooperative purchasing programs and methods of estimating those savings.	o Variation in amount of information RESAs have on these programs. o Variations in methods of estimating savings.	o Used information collected to analyze ARC question on cost savings through economies of scale programs.

TABLE 1: RAPID FEEDBACK METHODOLOGY
FOR OBTAINING INFORMATION ON
ECONOMIES OF SCALE PROGRAMS

most common type of "economy of scale" program involved the cooperative purchase of supplies. Consequently, all RESAs were contacted again to verify whether they were operating "cooperative purchase" programs. Those RESAs with such programs, and which had not been visited, were recontacted by telephone to collect information on cost savings in cooperative purchase programs and to ascertain how estimates of cost savings were calculated.

Through the above sequence of data collection steps, our information on RESA "economy of scale" programs was increased and refined to answer the ARC policy question. In examining RESA programs relative to the other policy questions, no single program was identified that provided the majority of evidence on a question, as the cooperative purchase programs did for the economy of scale question. Consequently, the final set of telephone calls to obtain detailed information on cooperative purchase programs was a step unique to the economy of scale policy question.

B. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The remainder of this report is organized into seven chapters. Chapters II-VI each address one of the five policy issues raised by ARC in the Request for Proposals (RFP) for this study. Chapter VII addresses an ARC question on the effectiveness of RESAs in increasing the flow of state and federal monies into their regions. And Chapter VIII suggests strategies for ARC's use in monitoring and evaluating RESAs and the programs ARC funds through RESAs.

A definitional structure was developed for each of the questions; data collected were applied to that structure and analyzed to address the questions.

Since most data were collected from the 11 RESAs we visited during the study, most answers focus on those 11 RESAs. Gaps in the data presented occur for three reasons:

- o the data were not readily available;
- o the data were not provided when requested; and
- o data provided were not applicable.

Appendix A to this report contains a list of the RESAs from which information was obtained for this study. Appendix B contains a list by RESA of the set of current projects and programs that have been identified during this study. It is provided here to give the reader more information on the programs identified in answering the questions in this report.

RESA characteristics identified in Chapter VI of this report were discussed in detail in "Report on Regional Education Service Agencies in Appalachia."[1]

C. IDENTIFICATION OF POLICY QUESTIONS

The policy questions addressed separately below ask about specific benefits which it is hoped RESAs will enable their school districts to realize. The first question asks whether services or educational opportunities which existed independent of the RESA were improved as a result of RESA activities, and whether residents are given the opportunity to benefit from programs or services which were previously unavailable to them.

The second question asks whether the combining of local monies through a RESA enables local school districts to purchase needed programs or services which individually the smaller districts could not have afforded.

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[1] Ibid.

The third question asks whether school districts use their RESA as a means for combining their funds to purchase services, programs, or commodities which they would have purchased without the RESA, but at a higher price.

The fourth question asks whether the services RESAs provide are reaching students, and are ones which individual school districts could not efficiently or economically provide for those students.

The fifth question is directed at identifying circumstances or factors which influence RESAs' ability to provide the benefits addressed in the previous four questions.

II. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO A REGION'S RESIDENTS

The first policy issue raised by ARC is:

> How successful is the RESA program in terms of its primary objective of providing an institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources to improve the quality and quantity of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents?

There is evidence to indicate that monies are combined in all RESAs to provide programs improving either the quality or quantity of educational opportunities and services available to a region's residents. The achievement of such improvements were identified in the 11 RESAs visited during this study. Based on information collected in the other RESAs, we expect to find those improvements in most or all of the other RESAs.

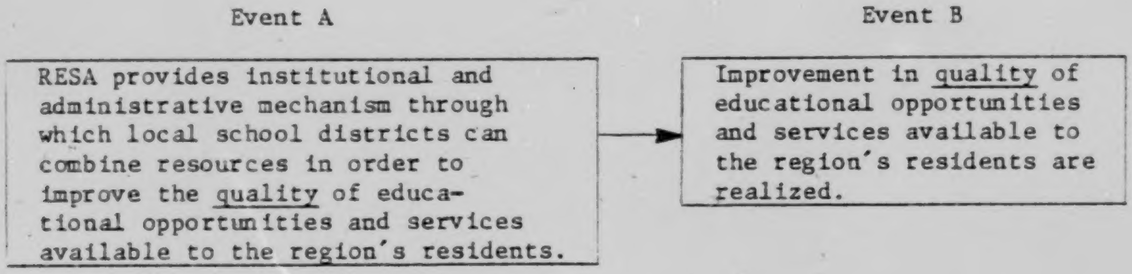
In this chapter improvements in quality and quantity are treated separately, as two distinct questions. Quality improvements are those that affect existing services or programs in the participating school systems. That is, RESAs introduce activities to improve programs that already exist. Section A presents a discussion of quality improvements. Quantity improvements are realized when new programs are offered to the residents of a region served by a RESA or when a program offered to one segment of the population is expanded to reach an additional segment. Section B presents the discussion of quantity improvements.

A. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO A REGION'S RESIDENTS

This section presents the definitions and measures used to answer the question on quality improvements. It also summarizes the data collected and the results of the analyses based on that data for this question.

1. DEFINITION OF THE QUESTION ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

In order to define this policy in detail sufficient to answer it, and to provide a basis for future evaluations, the following structure has been utilized:



Event A

RESA provides institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources in order to improve the quality of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents.

Event B

Improvement in quality of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents are realized.

FIGURE 1: MODEL OF THE POLICY QUESTION

Event A corresponds to the utilization of the RESA as a means for combining resources in order to provide programs designed to result in quality improvements. Event B corresponds to the actual achievement of the quality improvements as a result of the RESA programs. In the following discussion, we define each event in the model.

a. Definition of Event A: Combining Resources through a RESA in Order to Affect Quality Improvements

Programs are said to be examples of this event if they fit the following definition:

- Program is designed to affect an existing program, service or activity operating in the region.
- The existing program, service or activity in the region is available to the residents of the region.

The funds to support these programs can come to the RESA from a variety of sources, as illustrated in Figure 2.

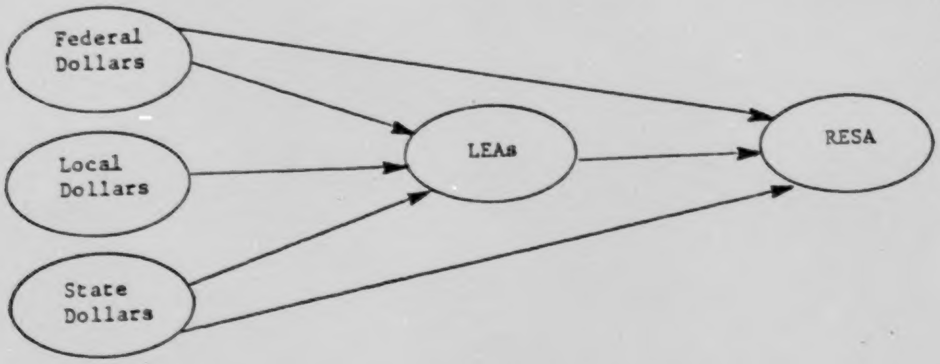


FIGURE 2: COMBINING RESOURCES THROUGH A RESA

b. Definition of Event B: The Improvements in Quality As Intended in Event A Are Realized

We have developed a functional model describing the educational process in which RESAs intervene for the analysis of this question and questions 2 and 4. The model illustrates the points in the process at which RESA intervention takes place. The model, shown in Figure 3 below, has been developed from descriptions of RESAs' involvement in programs obtained during the telephone interviews and site visits.

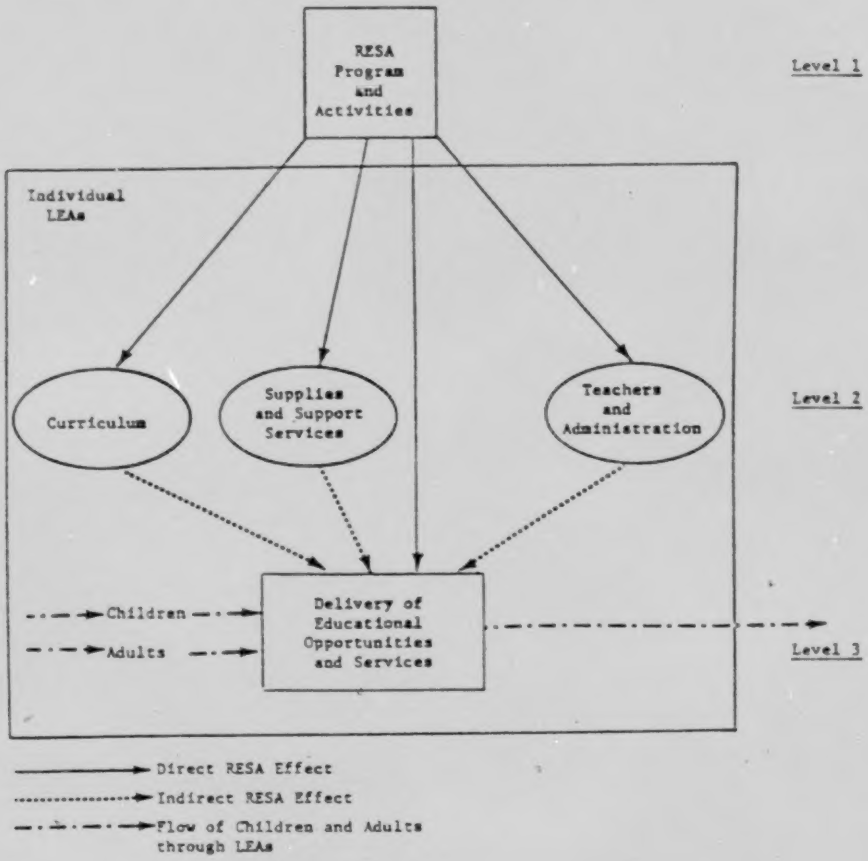

RESA Program and Activities
Level 1
Individual LEAs
Curriculum
Supplies and Support Services
Teachers and Administration
Level 2
Children
Adults
Delivery of Educational Opportunities and Services
Level 3
Direct RESA Effect
Indirect RESA Effect
Flow of Children and Adults through LEAs

FIGURE 3: RESA INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Three levels at which activity takes place are:

- Level 1: RESAs are engaged in activities and programs.
- Level 2: The mechanism for delivering services to the residents of the region is affected by a RESA. A RESA program may affect the teachers in the region by providing them with a new skill or by increasing their number. A RESA program may affect curriculum by introducing a new one or facilitating the introduction of a new one. A RESA program may affect the availability or the speed with which support personnel or materials are provided. And finally, a RESA program can affect school district administrators who then may affect any component of the delivery mechanism.
- Level 3: Area residents participate in the educational process. Children and local adults take advantage of and are affected by

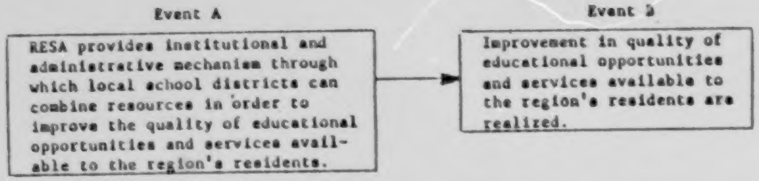
the educational opportunities and services provided directly or indirectly by a RESA. Here one looks at whether residents do take advantage of those opportunities and, if they do, what effects occur.

Event B is defined as changes in the quality of Level 2 factors--teachers/administrators, curriculum, supplies and support services--attributable to a RESA program. That is, these are programs designed primarily to affect changes in the existing service delivery mechanism which provides educational opportunities and services to the region's residents.

2. MEASURES UTILIZED TO ASSESS RESA PERFORMANCE AND EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

We have identified several measures which can be utilized to determine whether and to what extent an event occurs. These measures are identified in Figure 4, and are discussed below.

Measures for the first event (the combination of resources through a RESA to improve the quality of opportunities available to a region's residents) are of two types. The primary measure is "binomial." That is, a program either is or is not the type defined and is or is not intended to affect one of the three major categories in the service delivery mechanism (Level 2 in the functional model, Figure 3). The second type of measure focuses on the monies combined through the RESA to provide the programs fitting the definition of the event. This measure is used to provide a perspective on the magnitude of the programs offered. These measures and the evidence which was sought to verify their achievement are provided in Table 2 below.



Event A

RESA provides institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources in order to improve the quality of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents.

Event B

Improvement in quality of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents are realized.

RESA	RESA Budget	Program	Cost of Program	Point at which improvement is intended.			Total Cost of Programs as Percent of RESA Budget
				Teachers or Administrators	Curriculum	Supplies or Support Services	

Measures

- o Operation of a program intended to improve quality.
- o Whether or not the program is intended to affect teachers, administrators, curriculum, supplies or support services.
- o Cost of program.

Evidence

- o Documentation
- o Authority

RESA	Program	Point at which improvement is realized.			
		Teachers or Administrators	Number Affected	Curriculum	Supplies or Support Services

Measures

- o Operation of a program which causes quality improvements.
- o Quality improvements to teachers, administrators, curriculum, supplies or support services.
- o Numbers of teachers or administrators affected.

Evidence

- o Documentation
- o Authority

FIGURE 4: MEASURES OF EVENTS

Measure of the Event	Type of Evidence Sought
o Operation of a program meeting the definition of the event.	o Documentation that the program fits the definition. o Authority opinion that the program fits the definition.
o Identification of whether or not program is designed to affect teachers (administrators), curriculum, or supplies or support services.	o Documentation of the effect the program is expected to have. o Authority testifying that the program is intended to affect one of those categories.
o Cost of operating programs which meet the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating costs of each program. o Authority testifying to amount of funding for each program.
o Percent of RESA budget combined for programs meeting the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating costs of each program. o Authority testifying to amount of funding for each program.

TABLE 2: MEASURES AND TYPES OF EVIDENCE FOR FIRST EVENT

Measures for the second event (the realization of improvements as intended) are of three types: project outcome measures; binomial measures; and size of population affected. The first type of measure, project outcome, is one which must be identified for each program to capture the actual change in the participants, or the difference between a new curriculum and an old one. For example, a program introduced to change the skills of teachers might be measured using pre/post tests of the teachers' skills in the area which the program expects to affect. Although such measures allow one to discuss the success of individual programs, they do not provide the common measure one needs to discuss overall success of RESAs in affecting quality improvements. For this purpose, a second type of measure is utilized--the "binomial" type. It is used to indicate whether or not the intended improvements are realized. This measure allows a summation of RESAs' achievements of the event. A third measure, size of population affected, can be used across all programs in which the intended quality improvement is to be realized by affecting directly teachers or administrators. This measure is simply a count of the number of people affected.

Types of evidence sought for this event include:

- o Documented studies of programs.
- o Routine participation reports.
- o Activity reports identifying curricula, supplies obtained, or changes in support services.
- o Authority testifying to the participation or changes.

3. DATA OBTAINED, EVIDENCE PROVIDED, AND THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Data to answer this question were obtained from the 11 RESAs visited during this study.

a. Event A: Combining Resources through a RESA in Order to Affect Quality Improvements

Table 3 below presents the data collected on this event. A check, "✓," under "Teachers or Administrators," "Curriculum," or "Supplies or Support Services" means that the program was designed to improve quality through one of those mechanisms. Ten of the eleven RESAs visited are

RESA	RESA Budget	Program	Cost of Program*	Point at which improvement is intended.** Teachers or Administrators	Curriculum	Supplies or Support Services	Total Cost of Programs as Percent of RESA Budget*
Huntsville, Ala.	$ 219,599	AESP***	$ 14,147	✓	✓		7%
Morehead, Ky.		Special Education	$ 34,000	✓		✓	
		Math Consultant		✓		✓	
		Inservice	$ 6,700	✓		✓	
Cumberland, Md.	$1,038,642	Career Education	$ 84,050	✓	✓		42%
		Preventive Health	$173,283			✓	
		Health Education	$167,082	✓	✓	✓	
		AESP**	$ 13,500	✓	✓		
New Albany, Miss.	$ 181,993	Assessment Center		✓			
		Resource Center		✓		✓	
Canton, N.C.	$ 434,323	Special Education	$ 88,000	✓		✓	
		Workshops	$ 71,000	✓			
		Facilitator	$ 50,000	✓		✓	
		Media Center	$ 50,000			✓	
		Occupational Education		✓		✓	
		Exceptional Children		✓		✓	
		Reading		✓		✓	
		Food Services				✓	
		Research and Evaluation		✓		✓	
Athens, Ohio		Staff Development		✓		✓	
		Talented and Gifted		✓		✓	
		Early Childhood Education		✓		✓	
		Special Education		✓		✓	
		Media Resource Center				✓	
Alcoa, Tenn.		Driver Education	$ 18,110		✓	✓	
		Psychological Services	$165,000			✓	
		Reading		✓		✓	
Oak Ridge, Tenn.	$ 495,230	Driver Education	$144,771		✓	✓	
		Materials Center				✓	
Norton, Va.		AESP**	$ 29,000	✓	✓		
		Media Services				✓	
Martinsburg, W. Va.		Parent Education Training	$ 58,000	✓		✓	
		Special Education	$ 19,642	✓		✓	
		Teacher Education Center	$ 17,000	✓		✓	

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*The blank spaces in this column are due to the fact that costs were not identified for all programs or RESA budgets were incomplete.
**A check, "✓," indicates that the program is designed to affect this point in the service delivery mechanism.
***Appalachian Education Satellite Program

TABLE 3: PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE QUALITY (1975-76)

currently operating programs designed to improve the quality of educational opportunities and services available to area residents. Those 10 RESAs operate a total of 34 such programs, which represent 49 percent of the total number of programs they operate. These 34 programs account for at least $1,211,070 out of the total budgets for those RESAs. Twenty-five of the thirty-four programs were designed to affect teachers or administrators, seven to affect curriculum, and twenty-eight to affect supplies or support services.

Some of the programs, such as one for talented and gifted children, a math consultant and a reading program, involve the provision of one specialist who offers advice, materials or other assistance to a number of individual teachers in the participating school districts. The specialist is provided to improve the programs and services offered by those individual teachers.

Other programs, such as the Appalachian Education Satellite Program, workshops for teachers and administrators and media centers, are designed to improve the skills of groups of classroom teachers or administrators in the participating schools. Media centers are operated regionally to assure optimal utilization of the available materials and to increase the amount of materials available to each participating school district without significantly increasing the costs to each district.

Programs such as the health education and preventive health programs operated by the Cumberland, Maryland RESA require overall coordination and administrative responsibilities which it is felt, at least in the initial years of the programs, could be handled more easily by the RESA than by each individual participating school district.

The evidence used to determine whether a program fits this category was the testimony of "authorities," such as RESA directors or program directors.

However, documentation such as program grant applications and annual plans describing the intended benefits of programs were frequently available, and reviewed when provided. Evidence used to document the costs of these programs was either the testimony of authorities or documented budget information provided by RESA or program directors.

b. Event B: The Improvements in Quality As Intended in Event A Are Realized

Three types of measures were identified for this event: project outcome measures; binomial measures, and size of population affected. Table 4 below presents the data collected during this study for the event, using two of those measures. The check, "✓," entries in the table indicate whether or not the intended benefit was being realized through the program, and when teachers or administrators are affected. The numbers indicate how many were affected. Most RESA programs are not assessed with the first type of measure identified, the actual changes realized in the service delivery mechanism. For approximately 20 percent of the 34 programs identified in Table 4, studies were available or were planned to measure the changes attributed to the program. Because of the diversity in programs, in the effects intended by those programs, and methodologies identified to measure those effects, even a complete set of studies, one for each program, would have to reduce to a "binomial" measure of whether or not the quality improvements were realized in order to answer this question.

The evidence used for each of the measures identified in Event B was the testimony of an "authority." Most RESA programs which provide services directly to some populations keep records on the number of participants, and those records frequently provided RESA directors or program directors with the information which they provided on this event.

RESA	Program	Point at which improvement is realized.*			
		Teachers or Administrators	Number Affected	Curriculum	Supplies or Support Services
Huntsville, Ala.	AESP**	✓	***	✓	
Morehead, Ky.	Special Education	✓	120		✓
	Math Consultant	✓	***		✓
	Inservice	✓	1200		✓
Cumberland, Md.	Career Education	✓	***	✓	
	Preventive Health				✓
	Health Education	✓	180	✓	✓
	AESP**	✓	***	✓	
New Albany, Miss.	Assessment Center	✓	55		
	Resource Center	✓	1200		✓
Canton, N.C.	Special Education	✓	300		✓
	Workshops	✓	560		
	Facilitator	✓	***		✓
	Media Center				✓
	Occupational Education	✓	***		✓
	Exceptional Children	✓	***		✓
	Reading	✓	***		✓
	Food Services				✓
	Research and Evaluation	✓	***		✓
Athens, Ohio	Staff Development	✓	***		✓
	Talented and Gifted	✓	***		✓
	Early Childhood Education	✓	***		✓
	Special Education	✓	***		✓
	Media Resource Center				✓
Alcoa, Tenn.	Driver Education			✓	✓
	Psychological Services				✓
	Reading	✓	30		✓
Oak Ridge, Tenn.	Driver Education			✓	✓
	Materials Center		150		✓
Norton, Va.	AESP**	✓	***	✓	
	Media Services				✓
Martinsburg, W. Va.	Parent Education Training	✓	***		✓
	Special Education	✓	130		✓
	Teacher Education Center	✓	1225		✓

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*A check, "✓," indicates that improvement in quality was realized, based on testimony of authority.

**Appalachian Education Satellite Program

***Three asterisks indicate that this information was not obtained.

TABLE 4: PROGRAMS IMPROVING QUALITY (1975-76)

4. EXTENT OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

This question focuses on improvements in the quality of existing educational opportunities and services. Based on the measures identified above and provided on the 11 RESAs visited, it is apparent that all but one of those RESAs are currently operating programs designed to improve the quality of existing educational opportunities and services. Furthermore, according to RESA directors and their staffs, those improvements are being realized in all programs in which they are intended.

The one RESA that is not operating such programs is a relatively new RESA, and the three programs it is operating all provide new opportunities or services.

Table 5 below answers the question on quality improvements by providing a summary of the data collected on the two events: RESAs offering programs intended to provide quality improvments, and RESAs achieving quality improvements through programs designed to achieve those improvements. The data on the RESAs achieving quality improvements are based on the experiences of local authorities as provided by RESA directors and their staffs and local school superintendents.

Table 6 below provides estimates on the extent to which programs designed to achieve quality improvements are operated in the 21 RESAs currently operating programs. These estimates are based on straight line extrapolations from the data collected in the 11 RESAs visited. There is no evidence to indicate that the RESAs not visited are dissimilar from those visited. Thus, while we have evidence of the performance levels given in Table 5, one can expect to encounter results similar to those described in Table 6.

Event A	Event B
RESA provides institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources in order to improve the quality of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents.	Improvement in quality of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents are realized.
o Number of RESAs offering programs designed to improve "quality": 10 out of 11 (91%). o Number of RESA programs designed to improve "quality:" 34 out of 73 current programs (47%). o Cost of programs designed to improve "quality": Range: $6,700-$173,283; Average: $63,741. o Total funds combined through a RESA for programs designed to improve "quality": Range: $14,147-$437,915; Average: $150,411. o Number of "quality" improvement programs designed to affect: --teachers or administrators: 25 out of 34 (74%). --curriculum: 7 out of 34 (20%). --supplies or support services: 28 out of 34 (82%).	o Number of RESAs achieving success with programs designed to improve "quality" (based on experiences of authorities): 10 out of 10 (100%). o Number of RESA programs successful in achieving "quality" improvements as designed (based on experiences of local authorities): 34 out of 34 (100%). o Number of teachers and administrators affected by programs improving "quality": Range: 30-1,225 per program; Average: 468 per program.

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION COLLECTED ON PROGRAMS IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO AN AREA's RESIDENTS*

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*All figures in this table are based on data available in 11 RESAs.

o Estimated number of RESAs offering programs designed to improve "quality": 19 out of 21. o Estimated number of RESA programs designed to improve "quality": 63 out of 133 current programs. o Estimated number of "quality" improvement programs designed to affect: —teachers or administrators: 47 out of 64. —curriculum: 13 out of 64. —supplies or support services: 52 out of 64.	o Estimated number of RESAs achieving success with programs designed to improve "quality": 19 out of 19. o Estimated number of RESA programs successful in achieving "quality" improvements as designed: 63 out of 63.

TABLE 6: ESTIMATES OF RESA PERFORMANCE IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNTIIES AVAILABLE TO AN AREA's RESIDENTS*

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*All figures in this table are based on extrapolations from data collected in 11 visited RESAs.

B. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE QUANTITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SERVICES AVAILABLE TO A REGION'S RESIDENTS

This section presents the definitions and measures used to answer the question on quantity improvements. It also summarizes the data collected and the results of the analyses based on that data for this question.

1. DEFINITION OF THE QUESTION ON QUANTITY IMPROVEMENTS

In order to define this policy issue in detail sufficient to answer it, and to provide a basis for future evaluations, the following structure has been utilized:

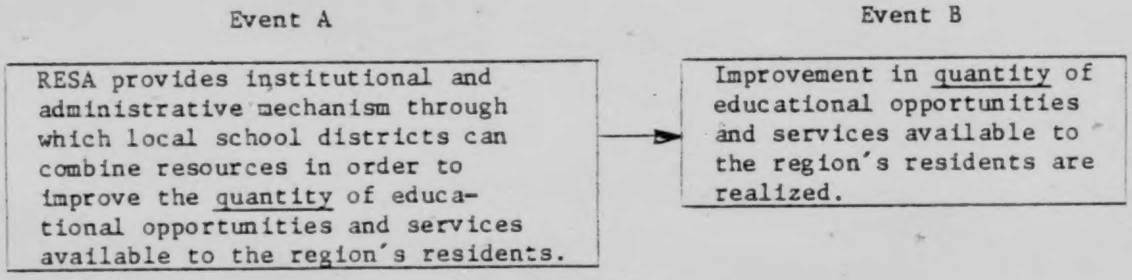

Event A
RESA provides institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources in order to improve the quantity of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents.
Event B
Improvement in quantity of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents are realized.

FIGURE 5: MODEL OF THE POLICY QUESTION

Event A corresponds to the utilization of the RESA as a means for combining resources in order to increase the quantity of educational opportunities and services available to a region's residents. Event B corresponds to the actual achievement of these increases as a result of RESA programs. In the following discussion, we define each event in the model.

a. Definition of Event A: Combining Resources through a RESA in Order to Affect Quantity Improvements

Programs are said to be examples of this event if they fit the following definition:

- either a service new to a region's residents is provided, or
- a service previously available to one segment of a region's population is expanded to another segment of the population.

The funds to support these programs can come to the RESA from a variety of sources, as illustrated below in Figure 6.

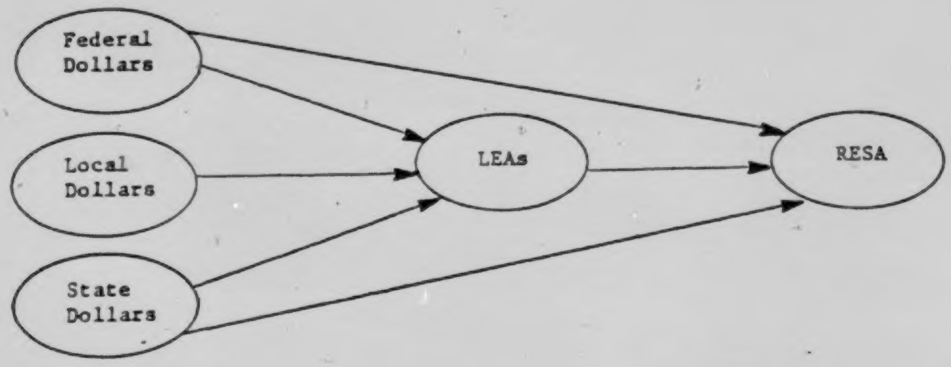


FIGURE 6: COMBINING RESOURCES THROUGH A RESA

b. Definition of Event B: The Improvements in Quantity as Intended in Event A Are Realized

In order to define this event, we use the functional model describing the educational process in which RESAs intervene, which was described in section A of this chapter, and is illustrated below in Figure 7. The model contains three levels of activity:

- Level 1: RESA engagement in a program.
- Level 2: Changes in the service delivery mechanism caused by RESA.
- Level 3: Participation of area residents in a RESA program.

Event B is defined at Level 3--change in the participation of residents through RESA programs.

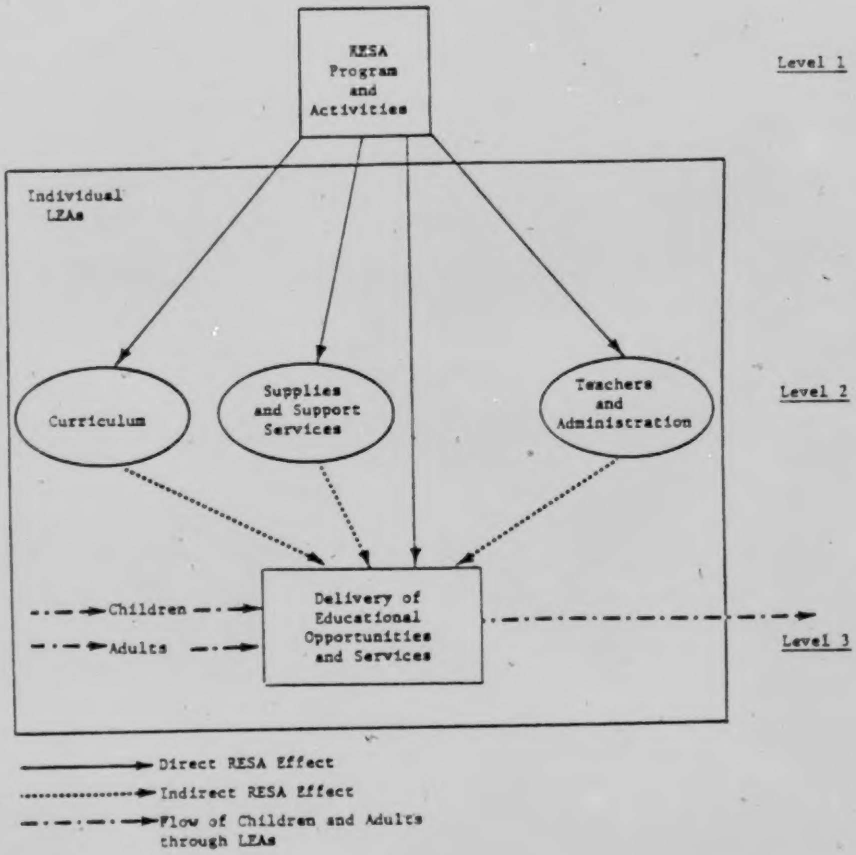
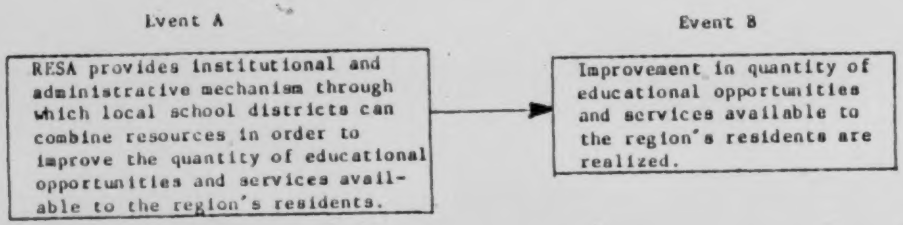

RESA Program and Activities
Level 1
Individual LEAs
Curriculum
Supplies and Support Services
Teachers and Administration
Level 2
Children
Adults
Delivery of Educational Opportunities and Services
Level 3
Direct RESA Effect
Indirect RESA Effect
Flow of Children and Adults through LEAs

FIGURE 7: RESA INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

2. MEASURES UTILIZED TO ASSESS RESA PERFORMANCE AND EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

We have identified several measures which can be utilized to determine whether and to what extent an event occurs. These measures are identified in Figure 8, and are discussed below.

Measures for the first event (the combination of resources through a RESA to improve the quantity of opportunities available to a region's residents) are of two types: binomial and cost. The primary measure is



Event A

RESA provides institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources in order to improve the quantity of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents.

Event B

Improvement in quantity of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents are realized.

RESA	RESA Budget	Program	Cost of Program	Target Population		Total Cost of Programs as Percent of RESA Budget
				Children	Adults	

RESA	Program	Population Reached by Program			
		Children	Number Participating	Adults	Number Participating

Measures

- Operation of a program intended to improve quantity of opportunities.
- Whether or not the program is intended to affect children or adults.
- Cost of program.

Evidence

- Documentation
- Authority

Measures

- Operation of a program which causes quantity improvements.
- Quantity improvements to children or adults.
- Number of children or adults affected.

Evidence

- Documentation
- Authority

FIGURE 8: MEASURES OF EVENTS

"binomial." That is, a program either is or is not the type defined, and is or is not intended to affect specific target populations, such as children or adults (Level 3 in the functional model, Figure 7). The second type, cost, focuses on the monies combined through the RESA to provide the programs fitting the definition of the event. This measure is used to provide a perspective on the magnitude of the programs offered. These measures and the evidence which was sought to verify their achievement are provided in Table 7 below.

Measure of the Event	Type of Evidence Sought
o Operation of a program meeting the definition of the event.	o Documentation that the program fits the definition. o Authority opinion that the program fits the definition.
o Identification of whether or not program is designed to affect children or adults.	o Documentation of the effect the program is expected to have. o Authority testifying that the program is intended to affect one of those groups.
o Cost of operating programs which meet the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating costs of each program. o Authority testifying to amount of funding for each program.
o Percent of RESA budget combined for programs meeting the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating costs of each program. o Authority testifying to amount of funding for each program.

TABLE 7: MEASURES AND TYPES OF EVIDENCE FOR FIRST EVENT

Measures for the second event (the realization of improvements as intended) are of two types. The first type is a "binomial" type, here used to indicate whether or not residents are actually provided with educational opportunities or services previously unavailable to them. The second measure, the number of people served by a program, is used to capture the extent to which the program reaches the target population.

Types of evidence sought for this event include:

- Documented studies of programs.
- Routine participation reports.
- Authority testifying to the participation.

3. DATA OBTAINED, EVIDENCE PROVIDED, AND THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Data to answer this question were obtained from the 11 RESAs visited during this study.

a. Event A: Combining Resources through a RESA in Order to Affect Quantity Improvements

Table 8 below presents the data collected on this event. A check, "✓," under "population affected" indicates whether the population for whom the program is intended is children or adults.

All 11 of the RESAs visited are currently operating programs designed to provide services to a resident population for whom those services were previously unavailable. Those 11 RESAs operate a total of 28 such programs, representing 38 percent of the total number of programs they operate. These 28 programs account for at least $2,010,047 out of the total budgets for those RESAs. Twenty of the twenty-eight programs are designed to affect children

RESA	RESA Budget	Program	Cost of Program*	Target Population** Children	Target Population** Adults	Total Cost of Programs as Percent of RESA Budget*
Huntsville, Ala.	$ 219,599	Home Start	$ 55,555	✓	✓	83%
		Adult Education	$ 68,818		✓	
		Talent Search	$ 58,290	✓	✓	
Morehead, Ky.		Vocational Education		✓		
		Adult Basic Education	$ 70,000		✓	
		Music		✓		
		Talented and Gifted		✓		
Cumberland, Md.	$1,038,642	Career Education	$ 84,050	✓		40%
		Family Aide Program	$330,000	✓	✓	
New Albany, Miss.	$ 181,993	Special Education	$ 50,530	✓		34%
		Talented and Gifted	$ 10,838	✓		
Canton, N.C.	$ 434,323	Early Childhood Education		✓		
Athens, Ohio		Early Childhood Education		✓		
Greenville, S.C.		Special Education	$ 97,000	✓		
		Career Education		✓		
Alcoa, Tenn.		Gifted	$ 25,652	✓		
		Safety Education	$ 1,733	✓		
		Special Education		✓		
Oak Ridge, Tenn.	$ 495,230	Vocational Education	$159,547	✓		55%
		Safety Education	$ 22,639	✓		
		Gifted	$ 90,943	✓		
Norton, Va.		Early Childhood Education	$320,012	✓	✓	
		Prevocational Education	$ 70,440	✓		
		Hearing Impaired	$ 70,000	✓		
		Talented and Gifted	$ 84,000	✓		
Martinsburg, W. Va.		Adult Education	$102,000		✓	
		Early Childhood Education	$238,000	✓		
		Public Service Education			✓	

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*The blank spaces in this column are due to the fact that costs were not identified for all programs or RESA budgets were incomplete.
**A check, "✓," indicates the targeted group.

TABLE 8: PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE QUANTITY (1975-76)

primarily, four are designed to affect adults primarily, and four are designed to affect both children and adults.

At least 12 of these programs provide services which were previously unavailable in the school districts to which they are offered. Programs for talented and gifted students are viewed as demonstrations in most RESAs where they are offered through the RESAs for several reasons: individual school districts felt they did not have the expertise to design and initially run the programs, nor the time or resources to recruit the expertise needed; by offering a regionally coordinated program in several school districts, variations could be tested and compared easily; and, coordination with individuals or organizations providing expertise for participating schools could be handled more efficiently by one person working in the RESA than by a person in each school district.

Other new programs offered through RESAs include safety education programs for which bicycles or motorcycles are needed. By running such programs regionally, the equipment can be shared on a rotating basis by all participating schools.

The evidence used to determine whether a program fits this category was the testimony of "authorities," such as RESA directors or program directors. However, documentation such as program grant applications and annual plans describing the intended benefits of programs were frequently available, and reviewed when provided. Evidence used to document the costs of these programs was either the testimony of authorities or documented budget information provided by RESA or program directors.

b. Event B: The Improvements in Quantity As Intended in Event A Are Realized

Table 9 below presents the data collected during this study for

RESA	Program	Population Reached by Program*			
		Children	Number Participating	Adults	Number Participating
Huntsville, Ala.	Home Start	✓	33	✓	120
	Adult Education			✓	3000
	Talent Search	✓	200 (Students and Adults)	✓	
Morehead, Ky.	Vocational Education	✓	**		
	Adult Basic Education			✓	350
	Music	✓	**		
	Talented and Gifted	✓	55		
Cumberland, Md.	Career Education	✓	4900		
	Family Aide Program	✓	2357	✓	950
New Albany, Miss.	Special Education	✓	3200		
	Talented and Gifted	✓	36		
Canton, N.C.	Early Childhood Education	✓	**		
Athens, Ohio	Early Childhood Education	✓	**		
Greenville, S.C.	Special Education	✓	**		
	Career Education	✓	**		
Alcoa, Tenn.	Gifted	✓	7		
	Safety Education	✓	1600		
	Special Education	✓	21		
Oak Ridge, Tenn.	Vocational Education	✓	400		
	Safety Education	✓	600		
	Gifted	✓	360		
Norton, Va.	Early Childhood Education	✓	380	✓	300
	Prevocational Education	✓	35		
	Hearing Impaired	✓	2000		
	Talented and Gifted	✓	128		
Martinsburg, W. Va.	Adult Education			✓	1256
	Early Childhood Education	✓	100		
	Public Service Education			✓	300

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*A check, "✓," indicates population group served.

**Two asterisks indicate that this information was not obtained.

TABLE 9: PROGRAMS IMPROVING QUANTITY (1975-76)

this event. The check, "✓," entries indicate which target population has realized benefits from the newly available service. The numbers in the table indicate how many in the target population are affected.

Two types of evidence were identified for this event: documentation of improvement and testimony of "authority." However, the evidence actually utilized for each of the measures identified in Event B was the testimony of an "authority." Most RESA programs which provide services directly to some population keep records on the number of participants, and those records frequently provided RESA and program directors with the information which they provided on this event.

4. EXTENT OF QUANTITY IMPROVEMENTS

This question focuses on the extent to which a segment of a region's residents are provided services which were previously unavailable to them.

Based on the measures identified above and provided on the 11 RESAs visited, it appears that all 11 of the RESAs are operating or facilitating programs which are designed to improve the quantity of educational opportunities and services to area residents. Further, those programs are reaching at least some part of the target populations they were designed to reach.

Table 10 below answers the question on quantity improvements by providing a summary of the data collected on the two events: RESAs offering programs intended to provide quantity improvements, and RESAs achieving quantity improvements through programs designed to achieve those improvements. The data on the RESAs achieving quantity improvements are based on the experiences of local authorities and provided by RESA directors and their staffs and local school superintendents.

Event A	Event B
RESA provides institutional and administrative mechanism through which local school districts can combine resources in order to improve quantity of educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents.	Improvement in quantity educational opportunities and services available to the region's residents are realized.
o Number of RESAs offering programs designed to improve "quantity": 11 out of 11 (100%). o Number of RESA programs designed to improve "quantity": 28 out of 73 current programs (38%). o Cost of programs designed to improve "quantity": Range: $1,733-$330,000; Average: $95,717. o Total funds combined through a RESA for programs designed to improve "quantity": Range: $27,385-$544,452; Average: $223,338. o Number of "quantity" improvement programs designed to affect: --children: 24 out of 28 (86%). --adults: 8 out of 28 (28%).	o Number of RESAs achieving success with programs designed to improve "quantity" (based on experiences of local authorities): 11 out of 11 (100%). o Number of RESA programs successful in achieving "quantity" improvements as designed (based on experiences of local authorities): 28 out of 28 (100%). o Number of children affected by programs improving "quantity": Range: 7-4,900 per program. Average: 912 per program.

TABLE 10: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION COLLECTED ON PROGRAMS IMPROVING THE QUANTITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO AN AREA'S RESIDENTS*

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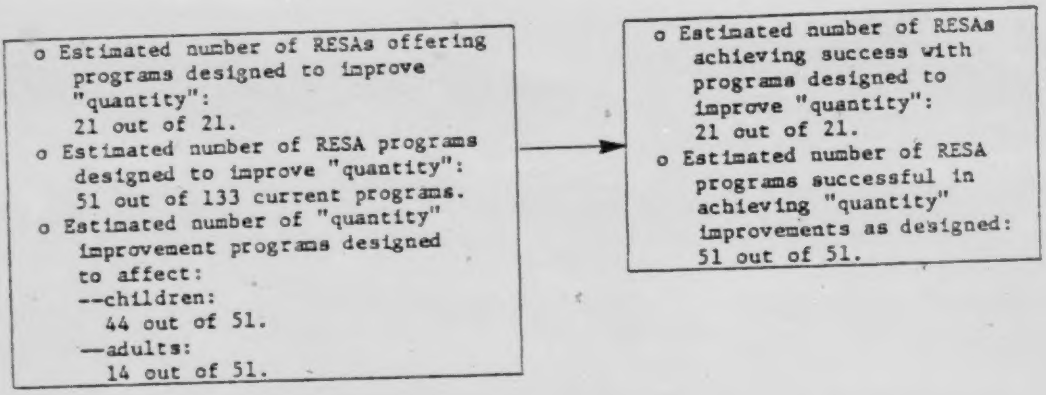
*All figures in this table are based on data collected in 11 visited RESAs.

Table 11 below provides estimates on the extent to which programs designed to achieve quantity improvements are operated in the 21 RESAs currently operating programs. These estimates are based on straight line extrapolations from the data collected in the 11 RESAs visited. There is no evidence to indicate that the RESAs not visited are dissimilar from those visited. Thus, while we have evidence of the performance levels given in Table 10, one can expect to encounter results similar to those described in Table 11.



- o Estimated number of RESAs offering programs designed to improve "quantity": 21 out of 21.
- o Estimated number of RESA programs designed to improve "quantity": 51 out of 133 current programs.
- o Estimated number of "quantity" improvement programs designed to affect:
  - --children: 44 out of 51.
  - —adults: 14 out of 51.

- o Estimated number of RESAs achieving success with programs designed to improve "quantity": 21 out of 21.
- o Estimated number of RESA programs successful in achieving "quantity" improvements as designed: 51 out of 51.

TABLE 11: ESTIMATES OF RESA PERFORMANCE IN IMPROVING THE QUANTITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO AN AREA's RESIDENTS*

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*All figures in this table are based on extrapolations from data collected in 11 visited RESAs.

III. SCHOOL DISTRICTS COMBINE THEIR FUNDS FOR PREVIOUSLY UNAVAILABLE PROGRAMS

The second policy issue raised by ARC is:

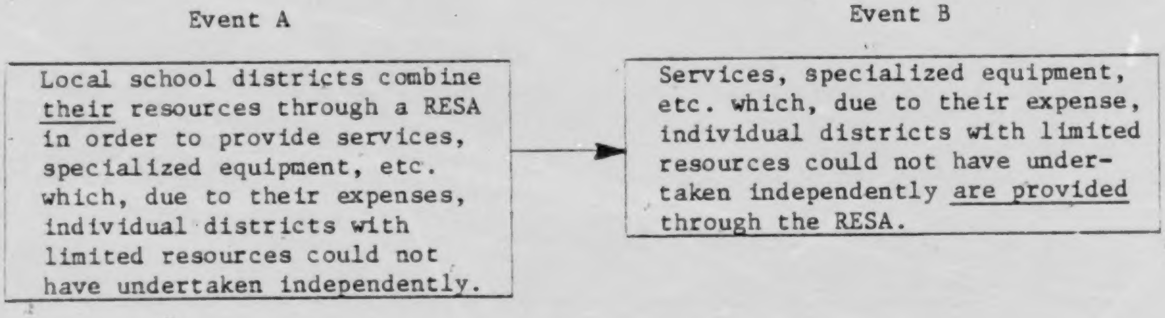
> Have local school districts effectively combined their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently?

Based on evidence collected, we estimate that in approximately half of the RESAs, local school districts combine funds which they control in order for the RESA to provide services, etc. which, due to their expense, individual school districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently. Those RESAs typically provide one such program at a time, with costs ranging from $6,700 to $165,000 per program.

Section A defines this question, and Section B identifies the measures utilized to assess RESA performance with respect to the question, and identifies evidence to be utilized. Section C presents the data collected, the evidence provided, and the current state of knowledge. Finally, Section D gives the results relative to the issue.

A. DEFINITION OF THE QUESTION

In order to define this policy issue in detail sufficient to answer it, the following structure has been utilized:



Event A

Local school districts combine their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expenses, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently.

Event B

Services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently are provided through the RESA.

FIGURE 9: MODEL OF THE POLICY QUESTION

Event A corresponds to the combining of locally controlled funds to achieve the benefits identified. Event B corresponds to the actual achievement of those benefits.

1. DEFINITION OF EVENT A: SCHOOL DISTRICTS COMBINE THEIR RESOURCES TO PROVIDE PREVIOUSLY UNAVAILABLE SERVICES, ETC.

Programs are said to be examples of this event if they fit the following definition:

- Program was not previously operating in most of the involved LEAs,
- Program would not have operated in most of the LEAs without RESA involvement,
- Program was beyond the available resources (talent, equipment, or money) of individual districts to initiate, coordinate, or demonstrate,
- Program was perceived to be too costly for individual school districts to initiate, and
- Locally controlled funds are utilized to finance the program.

The locally controlled funds include local monies, as well as state and federal resources which are awarded to the local school districts. Not included are those funds for which the RESA applies and receives directly from federal, state or other non-local sources.

The programs fitting this definition are sometimes called "threshold" programs because they would not have operated with local funds if it were not for the fact that through regionalization, the cost to the individual school districts is sufficiently low that those districts can afford to participate. These programs differ from "economies of scale" programs (Chapter IV) because the latter involve cost savings on programs or commodities that would have been purchased by the school districts, whether or not the RESA became involved.

2. DEFINITION OF EVENT B: THE PROVISION OF THE SERVICES, ETC. AS INTENDED IN EVENT A

In order to define this event, we have used a functional model describing the educational process in which RESAs intervene. This model was described in Chapter 2, and is illustrated below in Figure 10. The model contains three levels of activity:

- Level 1: RESA engagement in a program.
- Level 2: Changes in the service delivery mechanism caused by RESA.
- Level 3: Participation of area residents in a RESA program.

Event B is defined as changes in the service delivery mechanism (Level 2), or changes in the participation of area residents (Level 3).

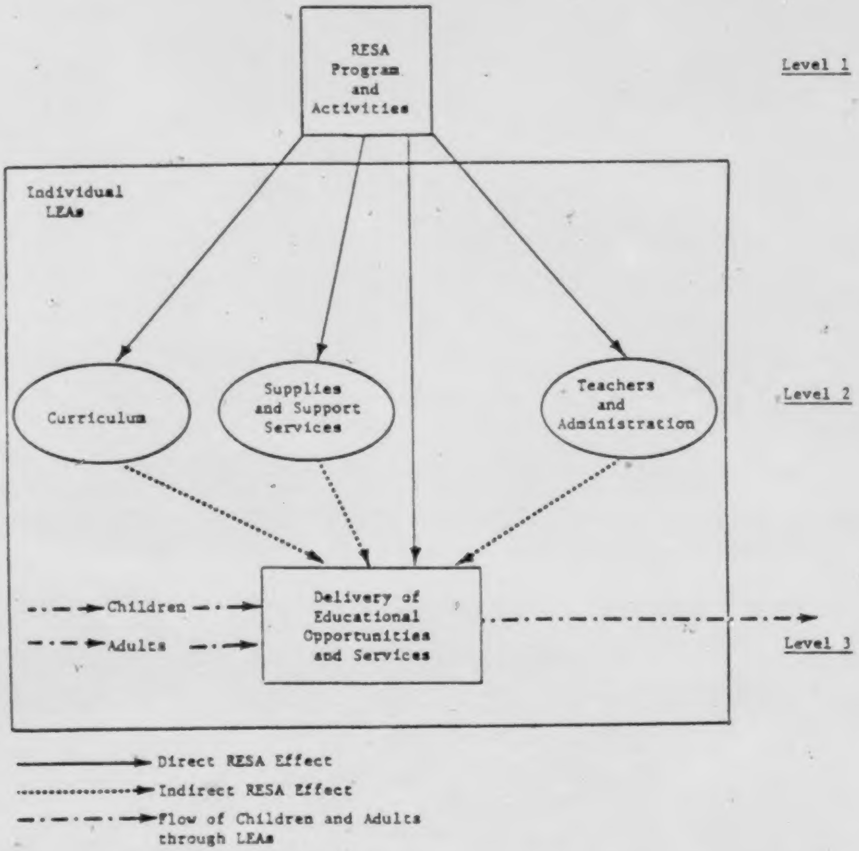
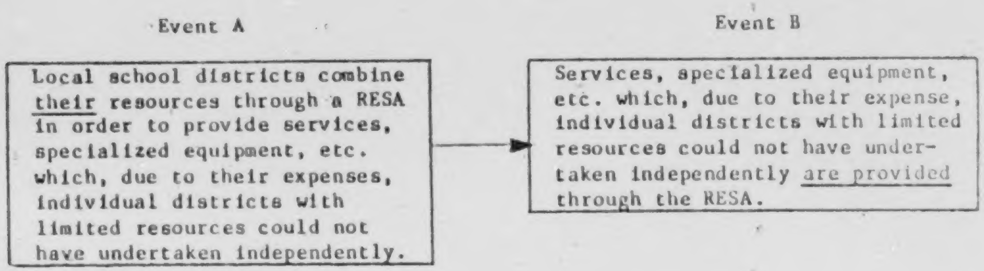

RESA Program and Activities
Level 1
Individual LEAs
Curriculum
Supplies and Support Services
Teachers and Administration
Level 2
Children
Adults
Delivery of Educational Opportunities and Services
Level 3
Direct RESA Effect
Indirect RESA Effect
Flow of Children and Adults through LEAs

FIGURE 10: RESA INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

B. MEASURES UTILIZED TO ASSESS RESA PERFORMANCE AND EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

We have identified several measures which can be utilized to determine whether and to what extent an event occurs. These measures are identified in Figure 11, and are discussed below.



Event A

Local school districts combine their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expenses, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently.

Event B

Services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently are provided through the RESA.

RESA	Amount of Local $ Combined through the RESA	Programs Fitting the Definition	Cost of Programs	Total Cost of Programs as Percent of Local $ Combined through the RESA

RESA	Program	Change Introduced through Program				Number of Residents Affected Directly
		Teachers/ Administrators	Number Affected	Curriculum	Supplies or Support Services	

Measures

- o Amount of local dollars combined through RESA.
- o Operation of program meeting definition.
- o Cost of program.
- o Cost of program as percent of local $ combined through the RESA.

Measures

- o Whether or not a change in teachers or administrators occurred.
- o Number of teachers or administrators affected.
- o Whether a change in curriculum occurred.
- o Whether a change in supplies or support services occurred.
- o Number of residents served by the program.

FIGURE 11: MEASURES OF EVENTS

Measures for the first event, school districts combining their funds for previously unavailable services, etc., and the evidence one would look for to determine achievements, are provided below in Table 12.

These measures fall into two types. The primary measure is binomial, identifying whether or not a program fits the definition of the event. The second type is costs associated with those programs: the costs of operating such programs, and the percent of local monies combined through the RESA which are spent on these programs. Cost measures are used to provide a perspective on the magnitude of programs offered.

Measure of the Event	Type of Evidence Sought
o The operation of a program meeting the definition of the event.	o Documentation that the program fits the definition. o Authority opinion that the program fits the definition.
o The cost of operating programs which meet the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating source of funding for each program. o Authority testifying to source and amount of funding for each program.
o The percentage of local monies combined through the RESA which are spent on programs fitting the definition.	o Documentation of total RESA budget and individual programs' budgets, each with source of funding indicated. o Authority testifying to source and amount of funding for total RESA budget and individual programs.

TABLE 12: MEASURES AND TYPES OF EVIDENCE
FOR FIRST EVENT

We have developed two types of measures for the second event (provision of the services, etc. intended in the first event). The first measure is again "binomial." It is used to measure whether or not the intended services are being provided. And for those programs that are providing the intended services, an additional measure, the number of residents affected directly, is also used. The latter measure provides some information on the size of a program.

Types of evidence sought for this event include:

- Documented studies of programs
- Routine participation reports
- Activity reports identifying curricula, supplies obtained, or changes in support services
- Authority testifying to the participation or changes

C. DATA OBTAINED, EVIDENCE PROVIDED, AND THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Data to answer this policy question were collected from the 11 RESAs visited during this study.

1. EVENT A: SCHOOL DISTRICTS COMBINE THEIR RESOURCES TO PROVIDE PREVIOUSLY UNAVAILABLE SERVICES, ETC.

Table 13 below presents the data collected on this event. Five of the eleven RESAs visited are currently operating programs which are funded primarily with local resources, which have not and would not have operated in

RESA	Amount of Local Dollars Combined through RESA	Programs Fitting the Definition	Cost of Programs*	Total Cost of Programs as Percent of Local Dollars Combined through the RESA*
Morehead, Ky.		Inservice	$ 6,700	
New Albany, Miss.	$181,993	School Board Policy Manual Preparation		
Canton, N.C.		Workshop Scheduling	$ 71,000	
Alcoa, Tn.		Psychological Services	$165,000	
Oak Ridge, Tn.	$313,722	Vocational Education Materials Center	$159,547 $ 7,785	53%

---

*The blank spaces in this column are due to the fact that costs were not identified for all programs or RESA budget data were incomplete.

TABLE 13: PROGRAMS INTENDED TO PROVIDE NEW SERVICES THROUGH COMBINED LOCAL RESOURCES

most school districts without the RESA, and which require resources beyond those available to the individual school districts. Two of the RESAs each operate two such programs, and the other three each operate one. These seven programs represent 19 percent of the total number of programs those RESAs operate, and at least $410,032 of the total combined budgets of those RESAs.

These programs do not appear to share any characteristics which would indicate the type of program for which school districts combine their funds. The school board policy manual preparation and the scheduling program both provide administrative support services. The in-service workshops and materials center all provide services for teachers in the participating school districts. All of these are programs which in other regions are provided either by individual school districts or, if regionally, with state or federal funds.

The evidence used to determine whether a program fits this category was the testimony of "authorities," such as RESA directors or program directors. Documentation which would indicate that the programs would not have been operated without the RESA is generally not readily available. Evidence used to determine the costs of these programs was again the testimony of authorities for four of the programs, and documentation provided by RESA directors for three programs.

2. EVENT B: THE PROVISION OF THE SERVICES, ETC. AS INTENDED IN EVENT A

Table 14 below presents the data collected on this event. A check, "✓," under the "Teachers/Administrators," "Curriculum," or "Supplies or Support Services" column means that an "authority" said that changes in

RESA	Program	Change Introduced Through Program[1]				Number of Residents Affected Directly
		Teachers/ Administrators	Number Affected	Curriculum	Supplies or Support Services	
Morehead, Ky.	Inservice	✓	1200			
New Albany, Miss.	School Board Policy Manual Preparation	✓	*		✓	*
Canton, N.C.	Workshops	✓	560			
	Scheduling	✓	*		✓	*
Alcoa, Tn.	Psychological Services				✓	2500
Oak Ridge, Tn.	Vocational Education					400
	Materials Center	✓	150		✓	*

---

1. A check, "✓," indicates point in delivery mechanism at which change was introduced, based on testimony of authority. An asterisk, "*," indicates this information was not obtained.

TABLE 14: PROGRAMS PROVIDING NEW SERVICES
THROUGH COMBINED LOCAL RESOURCES

teachers/administrators, curriculum, supplies or support services were being introduced through the program. The number of teachers or residents affected indicate the numbers receiving services directly through the program.

The evidence used for each of the measures in Event B was the testimony of an "authority."

Most RESA programs which provide services directly to some populations keep records on the number of participants and produce reports annually and, in some cases, more frequently, which provide documentation on the numbers served. For the two programs identified above as serving area residents, documentation was available on the number of participants in previous years, and therefore it is reasonable to expect similar documentation on those programs, and perhaps on the others at the end of the current operating year.

D. EXTENT TO WHICH OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE PROGRAMS ARE PROVIDED WITH LOCAL FUNDS COMBINED THROUGH RESAS

In nearly half (5 out of 11) of the RESAs visited, at least one program utilizing primarily locally controlled funds was being operated by the RESA to provide a service which otherwise might not be there. The amount of local money combined for these programs ranges from $6,700 in one RESA to $165,000 in another. The programs cover such diverse areas as preparation of school board policy manuals for local school boards, providing psychological services to school children, and running in-service sessions for teachers.

Table 15 below summarizes the data collected from the 11 RESAs visited to answer this question. In order to obtain an estimate of the total number of RESAs involved in "threshold" programs, the data from the 11 visited RESAs have been extrapolated to 21 of the RESAs. The two RESAs that were still in the "planning" phase were excluded from the extrapolation, since it was known they were not operating such programs. All other RESAs were included, since information was not obtained to indicate that any one of them may not be operating a "threshold" program. The results of the extrapolation are given in Table 16.

As indicated in Table 16, it is estimated that approximately 10 of the ARC-assisted RESAs are operating threshold programs and achieving success in utilizing local funds to provide services that would not otherwise have been available to those receiving them. However, this activity is estimated to represent only 13 out of the 133 programs identified in the 23 RESAs. On the other hand, the estimated average expenditure per RESA is slightly over $100,000. Most of the programs are estimated to be directed at teachers and administrators.

Event A	Event B
Local school districts combine their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expenses, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently.	Services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently are provided through the RESA.
o Number of RESAs operating "threshold" programs fitting the definition for this event: 5 out of 11 (45%). o Number of "threshold" programs provided by those RESAs: 7 out of 73 (10%). o Cost of "threshold" programs: Range: $6,700-$165,000 per program; Average: $82,006. o Range of local monies combined for "threshold" programs: Range: $6,700-$167,332 per RESA; Average: $102,508 per RESA.	o Number of RESAs achieving success with "threshold" programs (based on experiences of local authorities); 5 out of 5. o Number of "threshold" programs achieving success (based on experiences of local authorities: 7 out of 7. o Number of "threshold" programs which directly affect teachers or administrators: 5 out of 7 (71%). o Number of "threshold" programs which directly affect area residents: 2 out of 7 (29%). o Number of "threshold" programs affecting supplies or support services: 4 out of 7 (57%).

TABLE 15: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION COLLECTED ON EXTENT TO WHICH OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE PROGRAMS (THRESHOLD PROGRAMS) ARE PROVIDED WITH LOCAL FUNDS COMBINED THROUGH RESAs

Event A	Event B
Local school districts combine their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expenses, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently.	Services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently are provided through the RESA.
o Estimated number of RESAs operating "threshold" programs fitting the definition for this event: 10 out of 21. o Estimated number of "threshold" programs operated by those RESAs: 13 out of 133. o Estimated range of local monies combined for "threshold" programs: Range: $6,700-$167,332 per RESA; Average: $102,508 per RESA.	o Estimated number of RESAs achieving success with "threshold" programs (based on experiences of local authorities): 10 out of 10. o Estimated number of "threshold" programs achieving success (based on experiences of local authorities): 13 out of 13. o Estimated number of "threshold" programs which directly affect teachers or administrators: 9 out of 13. o Estimated number of "threshold" programs which directly affect area residents: 4 out of 13. o Estimated number of "threshold" programs which directly affect supplies or support services: 7 out of 13.

TABLE 16: ESTIMATE OF EXTENT TO WHICH OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE PROGRAMS (THRESHOLD PROGRAMS) ARE PROVIDED WITH LOCAL FUNDS COMBINED THROUGH RESAs

IV: COST SAVINGS THROUGH ECONOMIES OF SCALE

The third policy issue raised by ARC is:

> Have RESAs served as a means for local school districts to take advantage of economies of scale in the provision of education services, etc., thereby allowing the provision of basic services, equipment, etc., at a lower unit cost and increasing the total services available for a given level of local resources?

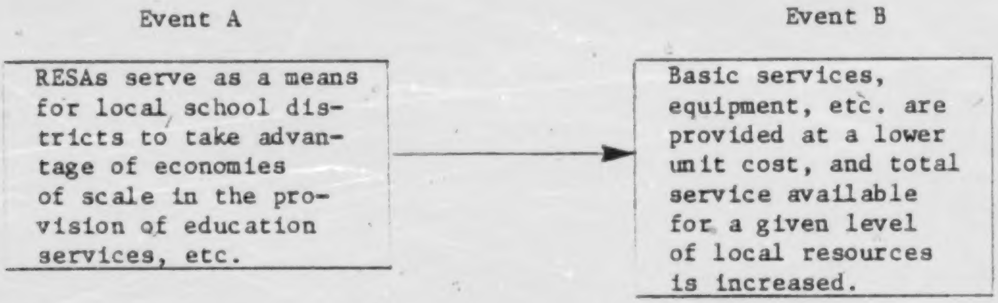
As discussed in the following paragraphs, there is evidence to indicate that RESAs have served as a means for local school districts to take advantage of economies of scale and achieve cost savings on basic services. Furthermore, available evidence indicates that the RESAs currently operating economies of scale programs are experiencing success with those programs. However, at present, the attempt to realize savings in this manner appears to be limited to approximately half of the RESAs and less than 7 percent of the total number of major RESA activities.

The actual amount of savings realized through the attempts to take advantage of economies of scale varies widely. For nine projects which we examined and for which estimates on savings could be developed, the savings ranged from $10,000 to $139,000, or from 5 percent to 50 percent of the total purchase being coordinated through the RESA.

These results are developed further in the following four sections. Section A defines the policy question, and Section B identifies the measures used in addressing this policy issue. Section C summarizes the current state of knowledge, and Section D gives the results relative to the issue.

A. DEFINITION OF THE QUESTION

In order to define the issue in sufficient detail to answer the policy question, the following model has been utilized:



Event A

RESAs serve as a means for local school districts to take advantage of economies of scale in the provision of education services, etc.

Event B

Basic services, equipment, etc. are provided at a lower unit cost, and total service available for a given level of local resources is increased.

FIGURE 12: MODEL OF THE POLICY QUESTION

Event A covers attempts by RESAs to achieve cost savings for local school districts by taking advantage of economies of scale, and Event B corresponds to the actual achievement of the savings as a result of the RESA involvement. Performance on each event is measured by the extent to which each event occurs. In the following discussion we will define each of the two events.

1. DEFINITION OF EVENT A: RESAs SERVE AS THE MECHANISM FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE

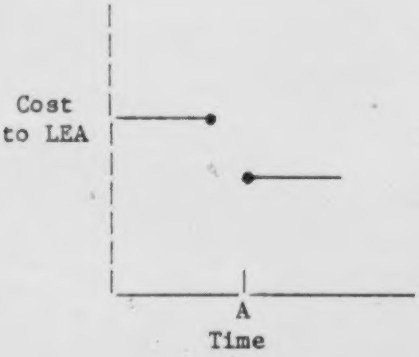
The following definition has been used in analyzing the economy of scale question. A specific RESA program is considered an example of a RESA acting as a means for local school districts to take advantage of an economies of scale program if:

- there is evidence that the service or equipment was being provided by the local education agencies (LEAs) or would have been provided by them without the program,
- the LEAs combined resources (dollars) through the RESA to provide the same type service or commodity to all participants, and

- o the program was designed to reduce unit costs.

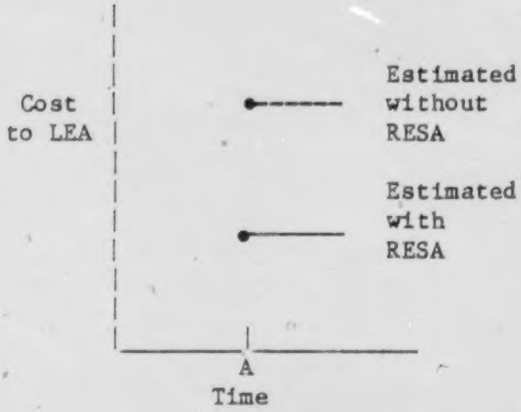
The following diagrams illustrate this definition:

a. The commodity or service has been provided previously.



The RESA program is introduced at point A in time, and the cost of the commodity is expected to go down.

b. The commodity or service had not been provided previously, but would have been provided by LEAs in the future without RESA involvement.



If RESA program did not exist, LEAs would purchase the new commodity on their own.

We found extensive ambiguity on what represents an economies of scale program. For example, in our discussions with RESA directors and with Superintendents, several activities were identified as economies of scale which, due to cost considerations, would not have been provided locally without RESA involvement. In fact, the RESA involvement may have actually caused the local districts to make an expenditure that never would have been made were it not for the RESA; in a sense, costs were actually increased. Therefore, we have excluded from this discussion programs identified as having such hypothetical cost savings. This type of program is, however, included in Chapter III in the discussion of programs which, due to their expense, individual school districts could not have undertaken independently.

2. DEFINITION OF EVENT B: ACHIEVEMENT OF SAVINGS THROUGH RESA PROGRAM

Two functional models describing the process of obtaining services and equipment have been developed for analysis purposes to determine the points in the process at which measures of Event B can be taken. The models, shown schematically in Figures 13 and 14 below, have been developed from descriptions of programs examined during the first phase of this study, the evaluability assessment.

a. Cost Element for Individual School District (Figure 13)

For an individual school district, we have identified three primary expenses associated with the delivery of specific commodities and services:

- The cost of determining the items to be purchased and the cost of ordering them (administrative costs).
- The actual unit costs of the items.
- The costs to the LEA associated with delivery of the items.

b. Cost Element Model When Resources Are Coordinated (or Combined) through a RESA Program (Figure 14)

When several school districts participate in a program designed

FUNCTIONAL MODELS

a. BEFORE THE RESA PROGRAM

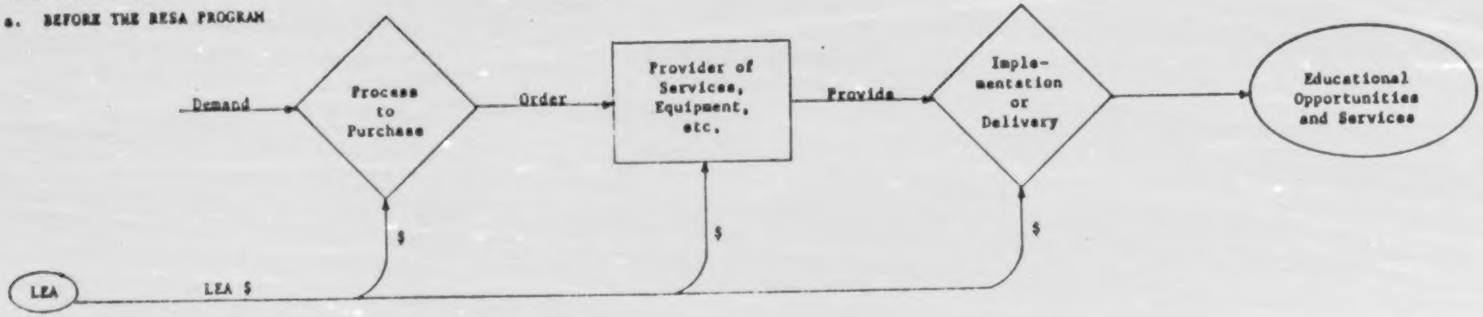

Demand
Process to Purchase
Order
Provider of Services, Equipment, etc.
Provide
Imple-mentation or Delivery
Educational Opportunities and Services
$
$
$
LEA
LEA $

FIGURE 13: COST ELEMENT MODEL FOR INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

b. DURING RESA PROGRAM

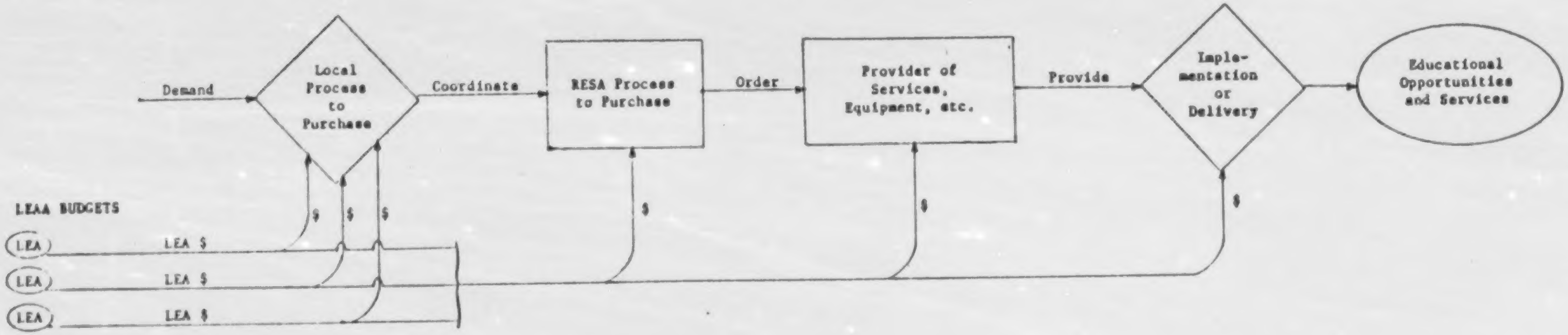

Demand
Local Process to Purchase
Coordinate
RESA Process to Purchase
Order
Provider of Services, Equipment, etc.
Provide
Imple-mentation or Delivery
Educational Opportunities and Services
LEAA BUDGETS
$
$
$
$
$
$
LEA
LEA $
LEA
LEA $
LEA
LEA $

FIGURE 14: COST ELEMENT MODEL WHEN RESOURCES ARE COORDINATED (OR COMBINED) THROUGH A RESA PROGRAM

to coordinate the expenditure of monies, an additional expense is introduced into the model:

- the cost of the coordinating activities.

In some programs, the RESA is the provider of the service or delivers the items purchased. If that role results in additional costs to the LEAs, those costs are included in the costs identified in Figure 13 for provision and delivery, respectively.

B. MEASURES UTILIZED TO ASSESS RESA PERFORMANCE AND EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

The measures used to assess RESA performance as a means for local school districts to achieve economies of scale are identified in Figure 15, and are discussed below.

The measures of savings achieved were generated from the functional models (Figures 13 and 14) which were used to describe the event. Since it was not known in advance how much documentation existed, we decided to consider four sources of evidence. The first source, documented cost analyses, was to be collected, when available, from the RESAs we visited. When documented cost analyses were not provided, the second type, an authoritative estimate of savings, would be requested. Those estimates, especially when obtained through a telephone interview, might be taken from documentation available, but which we would not obtain. The third type of evidence would come from an authority who had reason to believe that savings were being achieved, but had no estimates of the size of the savings. The fourth type of evidence, continuation of the program, would be used when a program

Event A

RESAs serve as a means for local school districts to take advantage of economies of scale in the provision of education services, etc., →

Measures of Event A

Type of Program	No. of RESAs With Such Programs	No. of Such Programs Identified
Economies of Scale		
Other		

Measures:

- o No. of RESAs out of set of 23 with at least one economy of scale program.
- o No. of programs defined as economy of scale program.

Evidence to be used to determine whether program is an economies of scale program:

(1) documentation showing that it fits the definition; or
(2) an authority saying that it fits the definition.

Event B

Basic services, equipment, etc. are provided at a lower unit cost, and total services available for a given level of local resources?

Measures of Event B

PROGRAMS	C_1	C_2	C_3	C_4	C_5	C_6	C_7

Measures:

C_1 —Change in local processing costs.

C_2 —Direct cost to LEAs of RESA participation in this activity.

C_3 —Change in total cost of commodity or service.

C_4 —Change in delivery cost.

C_5 —Net savings attributed to economy of scale program.

C_6 —Total expenditures through economy of scale program.

C_7 —Net savings as percent of current expenditures in economy of scale program.

Evidence to be used to determine whether cost savings were realized:

I. Documented cost analyses.
II. Authority providing cost estimates.
III. Authority providing qualitative opinion.
IV. School districts electing to continue the program.

FIGURE 15: MEASURES OF EVENTS

had been designed to save money for participating school districts and the school districts continued it, although there was no evidence demonstrating that their continuation decisions were, in fact, based on documented cost savings.

C. DATA OBTAINED, EVIDENCE PROVIDED, AND THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Table 17 below summarizes the information on Event A, programs fitting the economies of scale definition, and Table 18 summarizes the types of evidence used to prepare that table. By definition, an economies of scale program must meet three criteria given earlier. No documentation was provided on whether programs had previously existed or would have existed without the RESA; thus, all programs identified were identified on authority information.

Economy of scale programs identified for the programs not visited were determined from interviews in August 1975 and March 1976 with executive directors and Urban Institute assessment based on brief descriptions of programs provided by those directors.

Table 19 below summarizes the information collected on cost savings programs currently being operated. The programs are grouped according to the type of evidence provided. This table demonstrates that the evidence available focuses primarily on the cost of services or goods purchased and savings on those services or goods. Evidence was not available on the local school districts' processing or delivery costs. However, based on discussions with local personnel, it is estimated that these costs are

	11 RESAs Visited	12 RESAs Not Visited*
RESAs with One or More Economies of Scale Program	4	5
RESAs with No Economies of Scale Programs	7	7
Number of Economies of Scale Programs	4	5
Number of Programs Not Economies of Scale	69	55

TABLE 17: NUMBER OF RESAs OPERATING ECONOMIES OF SCALE PROGRAMS AND NUMBER OF PROGRAMS OPERATED

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*Two of the RESAs not visited were still in their first planning year during this study and, therefore, operated no programs.

Programs	No. of RESAs		No. of Programs	
	Visited	Not Visited	Visited	Not Visited
Documentation	0	0	0	0
Authority	4	5	4	5

TABLE 18: TYPES OF EVIDENCE COLLECTED ON THE OCCURRENCE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE PROGRAMS

Type of Evidence	Program	C_1*	C_2	C_3*	C_4*	C_5*	C_6	C_7	Year for Which Program Information Provided
I. Documented cost analyses	1. Cooperative Purchase Morehead, Kentucky			($ 46,587)		($ 46,587)			FY 75
	2. Cooperative Purchase Athens, Ohio		$13,551	($152,057)		($138,506)	$ 607,135	22%	FY 75
	3. Cooperative Purchase Johnson City, Tennessee			($ 52,000)		($ 52,000)	$ 525,000	10%	FY 76
II. Authority providing cost estimates	1. Cooperative Purchase Hazard, Kentucky			($ 10,000)		($ 10,000)	$ 23,000	43%	FY 76
	2. Cooperative Purchase N. Wilkesboro, North Carolina			($125,000)		($125,000)	$2,500,000	5%	FY 76
	3. Cooperative Purchase Ashland, Kentucky			($ 60,000)		($ 60,000)	$ 120,000	50%	FY 76
	4. Media Repair Canton, North Carolina					($ 12,000)			FY 76
III. Authority providing qualitative opinion	1. Cooperative Purchase Morgantown, West Virginia						$ 68,300		FY 76
	2. Driver Education Oak Ridge, Tennessee						$ 145,000		FY 76

Legend:

C_1 - Change in initial processing costs to school districts.*

C_2 - Cost to LEAs of RESA involvement in coordinating this activity.

C_3 - Change in cost of commodities or services purchased.*

C_4 - Change in delivery costs.*

C_5 - Net savings ($C_1 + C_2 + C_3 + C_4$).*

C_6 - Total expenditures through economy of scale program.

C_7 - Savings as percent of current expenditures in economy of scale program ($C_5/C_6 \times 100$).

*—Note that negative entries indicated in the table with parentheses ( ) represent cost savings, and positive entries represent an increase in costs.

TABLE 19: INFORMATION COLLECTED ON EVENT B: ACHIEVEMENT OF SAVINGS

not significant. The primary cost concern at the school system and RESA level is the supplier's price.[1]

Table 20 below summarizes the types of evidence used to prepare Table 19.

Type of Evidence	Number of Programs	
	from 11 RESAs visited	from 12 RESAs not visited
I. Documented cost analyses	3	0
II. Authority providing cost estimates	1	3
III. Authority providing qualitative opinion	1	1

TABLE 20: TYPES OF EVIDENCE COLLECTED
ON EVENT B BY URBAN INSTITUTE

Type IV evidence, school districts electing to continue the program, was collected on all economies of scale programs. The evidence indicates that in all nine RESAs, the local school districts have elected to continue the programs.

The methods used to estimate cost savings vary between RESAs and even within a RESA. Table 21 below gives examples of a few of these methods. One problem in trying to estimate savings is determining what the costs to local school districts would have been if economies of scale programs had not been introduced. This problem is compounded by the fact that within any region, it is not unusual for different school districts to pay quite different prices for essentially the same items.

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[1] In one RESA, the school systems had the option of either receiving direct delivery from a paper supplier or picking it up from a box car bringing the total regional purchases. The latter had a lower unit cost, but required pickup costs for the system. The superintendents chose the latter.

For only one of the nine programs identified as an economies of scale program were estimates made on costs other than those on the actual service or commodity purchased. In order to estimate more accurately the savings actually being realized, additional costs identified in the evaluable model should be measured. Those costs include: change in local processing costs; cost to LEAs of RESA participation in the economy of scale program; and change in delivery costs.

Type of Evidence Used	Examples of Estimating Procedures	Key Assumptions
I. Documented Cost Analyses	o Savings calculated by comparing costs with those of a sample of similar school districts in the state.	o Similar sized districts throughout the state pay similar prices when purchasing individually.
	o Savings calculated by comparing with unit costs available through state-arranged bids.	o State-arranged bid is lowest bid an individual school district will obtain on its own.
	o Savings calculated by using the difference between the two lowest bids received.	o Both bids are lower than the price a small school district would normally pay. Therefore, this provides a lower bound on savings.
II. Authority Providing Cost Estimates	o Estimates based on one or two examples of savings director knew about.	o Similar savings would be realized on all items.
III. Authority Providing Quantitative Opinion	o Program director knew that some school districts considered dropping out the program, but determined that the costs would increase significantly if they operated the same program on their own.	o Individual school districts calculated real savings.

TABLE 21: EXAMPLES OF THE ESTIMATING PROCEDURES USED BY THE RESAs

Table 22 below identifies some of the limitations and the advantages to the currently available information on cost savings in economies of scale programs.

Type of Evidence Currently Available	Limitations	Advantages
I. (Documented cost analyses)	o Non-comparable o Not much available on most cost elements o Reliability unknown	o Validates basis on which program started o Raises the certainty of authority opinion
II. (Authority providing cost estimates)	o Non comparable o No actual measurement of parameters o Low confidence o Not available on most cost elements	o Inexpensive o Allows rough estimate
III. (Authority providing qualitative opinion)	o Questionable validity o Questionable reliability	o Inexpensive
IV. (School districts electing to continue the program)	o Don't know if action is based on savings	o Inexpensive o Performance measure is at the point where decisions are made by ones who must weigh the benefits and costs

TABLE 22: LIMITATIONS AND ADVANTAGES
OF CURRENTLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION

D. EXTENT OF COST SAVINGS

Using the above criteria, economy of scale programs were identified and evidence obtained on cost savings in nine RESAs. The nine RESAs are a subset of sixteen RESAs from which data on economy of scale programs were collected: eleven visited RESAs plus five additional RESAs operating cooperative purchase programs on which cost data were obtained by telephone and documented material. In seven of the eleven visited RESAs, no evidence of economy of scale programs was obtained.

Table 23 summarizes the results of data collected on cost savings from nine RESAs identified as having economy of scale programs. The data in the table represents a minimum level of RESA performance relative to this policy question. However, it is reasonable to estimate, based on brief descriptions given of other programs, that some other RESA programs may actually be achieving economy of scale savings, even though evidence of the fact was not identified during the rapid feedback evaluation. In general, there are programs that have activities similar to the economy of scale programs for which evidence of cost savings was collected. This additional set of programs includes media, materials and film centers, driver education programs and cooperative purchasing programs. By including these programs, the data given in Table 23 has been extrapolated to the full set of RESAs.

Table 24 summarizes the results of the extrapolation. The data given in Tables 23 and 24 on the number of economy of scale programs and the number of RESAs operating such programs represent lower and upper estimates on the range of RESA performance relative to this policy issue.

For the other policy questions, the extrapolation of data from the visited RESAs to the full set of operating RESAs was linear. For this

Event A	Event B
Local school districts combine their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expenses, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently.	Services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources cold not have undertaken independently are provided through the RESA.
o Number of RESAs that have economy of scale programs: 9 out of 16. o Number of economy of scale programs: 9 out of 105.	o Number of RESAs successful in achieving cost savings: 9 out of 9. o Number of projects successful in achieving savings: 9 out of 9. o Range of savings reported: \$10,000-\$139,000. o Ratio of savings to total purchases made through economy of scale program: 5-50%. o Percent of currently operating economy of scale programs which have passed their first year: 100%.

TABLE 23: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION COLLECTED ON COST SAVINGS THROUGH ECONOMIES OF SCALE PROGRAMS

policy question, the characteristics of the economy of scale program in the visited RESAs were used to estimate the number of non-visited RESAs operating such programs and the number of programs operated by those RESAs. For the other policy question, such characteristics did not exist which could be applied reliably to general program descriptions of the type obtained on the activities in RESAs that were not visited as part of this study.

Based on the information summarized in Tables 23 and 24 and presented in previous sections, the following conclusions are drawn about cost savings through economies of scale programs:

- Not all RESAs are trying such programs. One can expect about one-half of the RESAs to be running them.
- In RESAs that have them--they represent only a small portion of total program activity. Still, one economy of scale program can handle an enormous volume of purchasing (e.g. an average of $570,000 in the programs presented in Table 19), with a small RESA investment of staff time.
- All RESAs that do run such programs are successful in achieving cost savings for the participating school districts.
- LEAs almost always elect to continue these programs.[1]
- Cost savings can be significant.
- The most common type of economy of scale program involves the cooperative purchase of materials and food.
- Examples of other types are: media repair and driver education.

In summary, RESAs have demonstrated a capability to provide actual cost savings for on-going programs. However, to date, other types of programs are more common and appear to have had greater priority in most RESAs.

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1. While all current programs achieving economy of scale cost savings have passed the first year of operations, some previously operated programs have been discontinued. For example, the Cumberland, Maryland RESA operated a cooperative purchase program recently and, through an independent evaluation, documented cost savings. However, the program was discontinued by the local superintendents' dissatisfaction with the way it operated.

Event A	Event B
Local school districts combine their resources through a RESA in order to provide services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expenses, individual districts with limited resources could not have undertaken independently.	Services, specialized equipment, etc. which, due to their expense, individual districts with limited resources cold not have undertaken independently are provided through the RESA.
o Estimated number of RESAs that have economy of scale programs: 12 out of 21. o Estimated number of economy of scale programs: 20 out of 133.	o Estimated number of RESAs successful in achieving cost savings: 12 out of 12. o Estimated number of economy of scale programs successful in achieving cost savings: 20 out of 20. o Estimated range of savings: $10,000-$139,000. o Estimated ratio of savings to total purchases made through an economy of scale program: 5-50%.

TABLE 24: ESTIMATED PERFORMANCE OF RESAs
ON SERVING AS A MEANS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ECONOMIES OF SCALE
IN THE DELIVERY OF EDUCATION SERVICES
TO REALIZE COST SAVINGS

V. COMBINING FUNDS TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

The fourth policy issue raised by ARC is:

> Have RESAs served as a mechanism to combine resources for the provision of specialized services to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts?

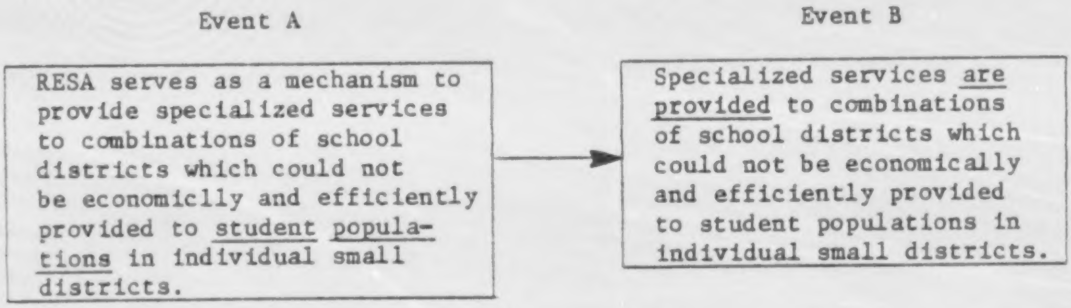
A few RESAs are currently offering only programs targeted at administrations and teachers, but nine of the eleven RESAs which we visited are offering programs for student populations which local superintendents and RESA directors feel the individual small districts could not offer economically and efficiently. Three of those RESAs each offer four such programs, and the others offer one to three of them. This chapter identifies the programs, their costs, and the size of their target population.

In each case, the RESA directors or their staffs felt the programs were successful in providing to students the services they were designed to provide.

Section A presents a definition of this question, and Section B the measures utilized to answer it. Section C summarizes the current state of knowledge, and Section D summarizes the results relative to the issue.

A. DEFINITION OF THE QUESTION

In order to define this policy issue in detail sufficient to answer it, the following structure has been utilized:



Event A

RESA serves as a mechanism to provide specialized services to combinations of school districts which could not be economiclly and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.

Event B

Specialized services are provided to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.

FIGURE 16: MODEL OF THE POLICY QUESTION

Event A corresponds to the utilization of the RESA as a means for combining resources for the provision of programs which individual small school districts could not and would not have provided independently. Event B corresponds to the provision of such services.

1. DEFINITION OF EVENT A: COMBINING RESOURCES THROUGH A RESA TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS TO STUDENT POPULATIONS

Programs are said to be examples of this event if they fit the following definition:

- The RESA obtains funding from the local school districts or from outside sources,
- The program requires specialized equipment and/or talent on an ongoing basis but not full-time (for any one district), and an administrative overhead,
- The program would not have operated in most of the LEAs without RESA involvement, and
- Service is provided to student populations.

The funds to support these programs can come to the RESAs from a variety of sources, as illustrated below in Figure 17.

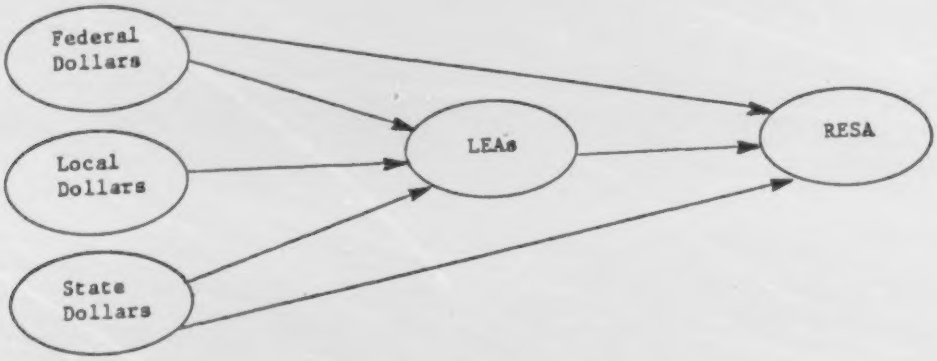


FIGURE 17: COMBINING RESOURCES THROUGH A RESA

2. DEFINITION OF EVENT B: THE PROVISION OF OTHERWISE UNAVAILABLE SERVICES TO STUDENT POPULATIONS

In order to define this event, we use the functional model describing the educational process in which RESAs intervene which was presented in Chapter 2, and is illustrated below in Figure 18. The model contains three levels of activity:

- o Level 1: RESA engagement in a program.
- o Level 2: Changes in the service delivery mechanism caused by RESA.
- o Level 3: Participation of area residents in a RESA program.

Event B is defined at Level 3--change in the participation of residents.

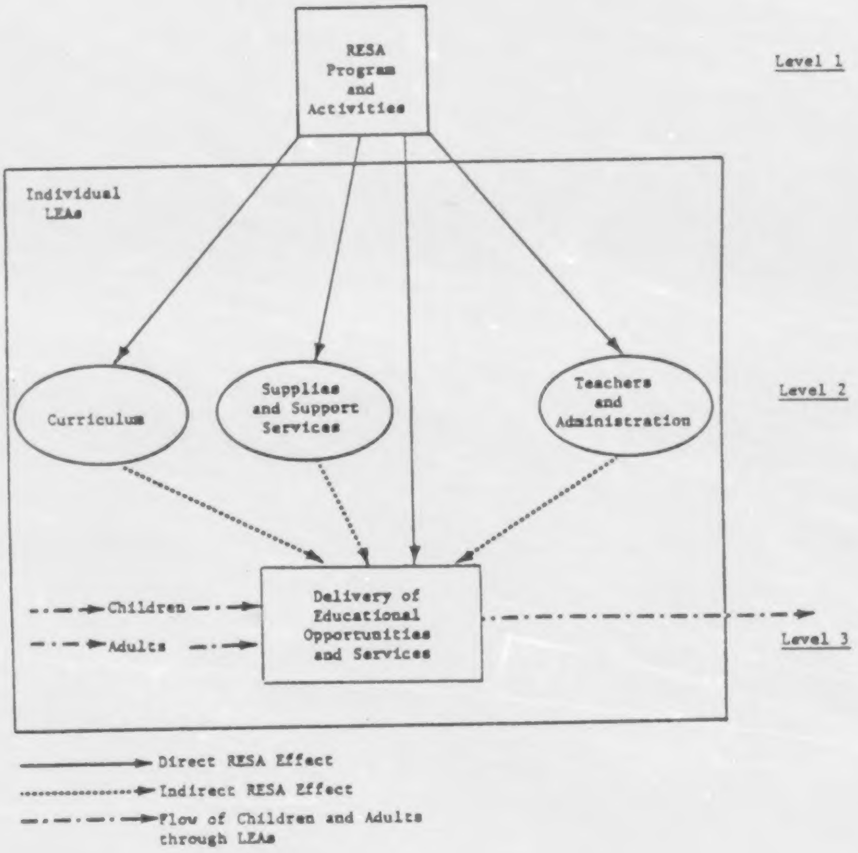

RESA Program and Activities
Level 1
Individual LEAs
Curriculum
Supplies and Support Services
Teachers and Administration
Level 2
Children
Adults
Delivery of Educational Opportunities and Services
Level 3
Direct RESA Effect
Indirect RESA Effect
Flow of Children and Adults through LEAs

FIGURE 18: RESA INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

B. MEASURES UTILIZED TO ASSESS RESA PERFORMANCE AND EVIDENCE OF ACHIEVEMENT

We have identified several measures which can be utilized to determine whether and to what extent an event occurs. These measures are identified in Figure 19, and are discussed below.

Event A

RESA serves as a mechanism to provide specialized services to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.

RESA	RESA Budget	Program	Cost of Program	Total Cost of Programs as Percent of RESA Budget

Measures

- o Operation of a program intended to provide previously unavailable services to students.
- o Cost of program.

Evidence

- o Documentation
- o Authority

Event B

Specialized services are provided to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.

RESA	Program	Number of Students Served

Measures

- o Operation of program which does provide to students previously unavailable services.
- o Number of students served.

Evidence

- o Documentation
- o Authority

FIGURE 19: MEASURES OF EVENTS

Measures for Event A in Figure 16 (the combining of resources to provide programs for students) are of two types: the primary measure is "binomial," indicating whether the program fits the above definition, the other--cost--measures the amount of monies combined through the RESA for the programs. The latter measure is used to provide perspective on the magnitude of programs offered. These measures and the evidence which was sought to verify their achievement are provided in Table 25 below.

Measure of the Event	Type of Evidence Sought
o Operation of a program meeting the definition of the event.	o Documentation that the program fits the definition. o Authority opinion that the program fits the definition.
o Identification of students as target population.	o Documentation of the effect the program is expected to have. o Authority testifying that the program is intended to affect students.
o Cost of operating programs which meet the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating costs of each program. o Authority testifying to amount of funding for each program.
o Percent of RESA budget combined for programs meeting the definition of the event.	o Documented RESA budget indicating costs of each program. o Authority testifying to amount of funding for each program.

TABLE 25: MEASURES AND TYPES OF EVIDENCE FOR FIRST EVENT

Measures for Event B in Figure 16 (the provision of services as intended) are also of two types: binomial, and size of population served. The first type is used to measure whether or not students are actually provided with the services previously unavailable to them. The second measure, the number of people served by a program, is used to capture the extent to which a program reaches the students.

Types of evidence sought for this event include:

- Documented studies of programs.
- Routine participation reports.
- Authority testifying to the student participation.

C. DATA OBTAINED,
EVIDENCE PROVIDED, AND
THE STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

Data were obtained to answer the question from the 11 RESAs visited during this study.

1. EVENT A: COMBINING RESOURCES THROUGH A RESA TO PROVIDE PROGRAMS TO STUDENT POPULATIONS

Table 26 below presents the data collected on this event. All programs entered in the table were identified as designed to fit the definition of the event. Included in this set of programs are programs offered to children in school, pre-school children, school-age children who are not in school, and out of school adults who are receiving the equivalent of some school training.

Some of the programs, such as those for talented and gifted children, are currently operated as demonstration programs, with the anticipation that eventually they will be controlled by individual school districts. Although these programs could ultimately be run by individual small school districts, it is felt that during their developmental stage such

RESA	RESA Budget	Program	Cost of Program*	Total Cost of Programs as Percent of RESA Budget*
Huntsville, Ala.	$ 219,599	Home Start	$ 55,555	83%
		Adult Education	$ 68,818	
		Talent Search	$ 58,290	
Morehead, Ky.		Vocational Education		
		Special Education	$ 34,000	
		Adult Basic Education	$ 70,000	
		Talented and Gifted		
Cumberland, Md.	$1,038,642	Career Education	$ 84,050	73%
		Preventive Health	$173,283	
		Health Education	$167,082	
		Family Aide Program	$330,000	
New Albany, Miss.	$ 181,993	Special Education	$ 50,530	34%
		Talented and Gifted	$ 10,838	
Athens, Ohio		Early Childhood Education	$ 10,838	
Alcoa, Tenn.		Gifted	$ 25,652	
		Safety Education	$ 1,733	
		Special Education		
Oak Ridge, Tenn.	$ 495,230	Safety Education	$ 22,639	23%
		Gifted	$ 90,943	
Norton, Va.		Early Childhood Education	$320,012	
		Prevocational Education	$ 70,440	
		Hearing Impaired	$ 70,000	
		Talented and Gifted	$ 84,000	
Martinsburg, W. Va.		Adult Education	$102,000	
		Early Childhood Education	$238,000	

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*The blank spaces in this column are due to the fact that costs were not identified for all programs or RESA budgets were incomplete.

TABLE 26: PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE NEW SERVICES TO STUDENTS (1975-76)

districts do not have the resources (usually time or expertise) to provide the services. That is, RESAs are better able to meet start-up costs and/or operate programs that initially have an element of risk associated with them.

Other programs, such as psychological services in Alcoa, Tennessee, could not be replicated by each small school district because crucial program components, such as coordination with local colleges and universities to utilize graduate students, and the network of contacts established with those schools and with other resources, would be difficult, if not impossible, for each school system to replicate.

Other programs, such as Adult Education and Safety Education, are thought to be more economically and efficiently run by the RESA because they require some expertise to coordinate, or expertise which is needed by any one school district frequently but not continually.

Nine of the eleven RESAs visited are currently operating programs designed to fit the definition of this event. Those nine RESAs operate a total of twenty-five such programs, representing 43 percent of the total number of programs they operate. Those 25 programs account for at least $2,127,865 out of the total budgets for those RESAs.

The evidence used to determine whether a program fit this category was the testimony of "authorities," such as RESA directors or program directors. Documentation which would indicate that the programs would not have been operated without the RESA is generally not readily available. Evidence used to determine the costs of these programs was either the testimony of an "authority" or a documented budget provided by the RESA or program director.

2. EVENT B: THE IMPROVEMENTS IN QUANTITY AS INTENDED IN EVENT A ARE REALIZED

Table 27 below presents the data collected on this event. The entry of a program in the table indicates that the program was identified as one which was providing the services as intended.

The evidence used for each of the measures in Event B was the testimony of an "authority." Most RESA programs which provide services directly to some population keep records on the number of participants, and produce reports annually and, in some cases, more frequently, which provide documentation on the numbers served.

D. EXTENT TO WHICH SPECIALIZED SERVICES ARE PROVIDED, ECONOMICALLY AND EFFICIENTLY, TO STUDENT POPULATIONS

Based on the measures identified above and provided by RESA directors and their staffs, nine of the eleven RESAs visited are combining monies to provide specialized services to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts. The programs offered in the other two RESAs focus on teachers and administrators. All 25 of the programs identified in those 9 RESAs were also identified by local authorities as successful in providing the services to student populations. The number of students served by those programs ranges from 7 to 5000. Table 28 below summarizes the results of the information collected in 11 visited RESAs.

In order to estimate the level of performance in the full set of 23 ARC-assisted RESAs relative to this question, the results in Table 28 have

RESA	Program	Number of Students Served
Huntsville, Ala.	Home Start	33
	Adult Education	3000
	Talent Search	200
Morehead, Ky.	Vocational Education	*
	Special Education	80
	Adult Basic Education	350
	Talented and Gifted	55
Cumberland, Md.	Career Education	4900
	Preventive Health	4500
	Health Education	5000
	Family Aide Program	2357
New Albany, Miss.	Special Education	3200
	Talented and Gifted	36
Athens, Ohio	Early Childhood Education	*
Alcoa, Tn.	Gifted	7
	Safety Education	1600
	Special Education	21
Oak Ridge, Tn.	Safety Education	600
	Gifted	360
Norton, Va.	Early Childhood Education	380
	Prevocational Education	35
	Hearing Impaired	2000
	Talented and Gifted	128
Martinsburg, W. Va.	Adult Education	1256
	Early Childhood Education	100

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*An asterisk indicates that this information was not obtained.

TABLE 27: PROGRAMS RESULTING IN NEW
SERVICES TO STUDENTS (1975-76)

Event A	Event B
RESA serves as a mechanism to provide specialized services to combinations of school districts which could not be economiclly and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.	Specialized services are provided to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.
o Number of RESAs with programs designed to provide new services to students: 9 out of 11 (82%). o Number of existing programs designed to provide new services to students: 25 out of 73 (34%). o Cost of programs designed to provide new services to students: Range: $1,733-$330,000 per program. Average: $101,327 per program. o Funds combined through a RESA for programs designed to provide new services to students: Range: $27,385-$754,415 per RESA. Average: $265,983 per RESA.	o Number of RESAs achieving success in providing new services to students (based on experiences of local authorities): 9 out of 9. o Number of programs achieving success in providing new services to students (based on experiences of local authorities): 25 out of 25. o Number of students served by programs providing new services: Range: 7-5,000 per program; 485-16,757 per RESA. Average: 1,313 per program; 3,775 per RESA.

TABLE 28: SUMMARY OF INFORMATION
ON EXTENT TO WHICH RESAs
PROVIDE SPECIALIZED SERVICES,
ECONOMICALLY AND EFFICIENTLY,
TO STUDENT POPULATIONS

been extrapolated to 21 RESAs. The two RESAs still in the planning phase were excluded in the extrapolation, since they were known not to be offering the type of programs under study here. The other ten non-visited RESAs were included in the extrapolation, since there was no evidence to indicate that they were not involved in providing new services to students at a rate and level similar to that encountered in the visited RESAs.

Based on the extrapolation of results in the 11 visited RESAs, it is estimated that 17 RESAs are involved in providing new services to students that otherwise could not be economically and efficiently provided by the local school districts. The 17 RESAs are estimated to operate approximately 46 such programs. The results of the extrapolation are further summarized in Table 29.

Event A	Event B
RESA serves as a mechanism to provide specialized services to combinations of school districts which could not be economiclly and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.	Specialized services are provided to combinations of school districts which could not be economically and efficiently provided to student populations in individual small districts.
o Estimated number of RESAs with programs designed to provide new services to students: 17 out of 21. o Estimated number of existing programs designed to provide new services to students: 46 out of 133. o Estimated cost of programs designed to provide new services to students: Range: $1,733-$330,000 per program. Average: $101,327 per program. o Estimated funds combined through a RESA for programs designed to provide new services to students: Range: $27,385-$754,415 per RESA. Average: $265,983 per RESA.	o Estimated number of RESAs achieving success in providing new services to students (based on experiences of local authorities): 17 out of 17. o Estimated number of programs achieving success in providing new services to students (based on experiences of local authorities): 46 out of 46. o Estimated number of students served by programs providing new services: Range: 7-5,000 per program; 485-16,757 per RESA. Average: 1,313 per program; 3,775 per RESA.

TABLE 29: ESTIMATED EXTENT TO WHICH RESAs PROVIDE SPECIALIZED SERVICES, ECONOMICALLY AND EFFICIENTLY, TO STUDENT POPULATIONS

VI. INCREASING THE FLOW OF FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES INTO THE REGION

This chapter addresses the question of whether the ARC-assisted RESAs "have been effective in increasing the flow into the region of federal and state funds for education programs." Several ARC staff members cited such an increase as a primary objective for having a RESA.

Two ways in which RESAs increase the flow of federal and state funds are discussed below. In the first, RESAs initiate, coordinate and operate programs utilizing state or federal funding for which most or all of the individual school districts would not or could not have applied. Information that has been collected provides evidence that RESAs have achieved increases in federal and state funds for the region in this manner. In the second case, the RESA assists an individual school district to obtain federal or state monies that are then spent by the district. Examples of how RESAs provide this type of assistance have been identified, but documentation on RESA performance in this regard is not available.

Increases in federal and state funds due to RESA operated programs are analyzed in Section A. Section B discusses RESA assistance to individual school districts.

A. INCREASES DUE TO RESA PROGRAMS

The first way in which the question is examined is by:

a. Identifying the total amount of state and federal resources obtained by the RESAs for programs administered, coordinated, or operated through them.

b. Identifying that portion of the resources obtained by the RESA which probably would not have come into the region without the RESA.

c. Comparing the two amounts obtained in (a) and (b).

d. Comparing the amount of state and federal resources obtained by the RESAs to the total amount of federal and state resources received by the individual school districts.

e. Comparing the amount of federal and state resources obtained by the RESAs with the administrative costs associated with operating a RESA.

f. Obtaining the perceptions of local education authorities on the effect RESAs have had on the flow of federal and state services.

Information from (a) and (b) determines the extent to which RESAs are directly involved in the flow of federal and state resources. Information from (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f) can be used to assess the effectiveness in increasing the flow. The results of the analyses are summarized in Table 30, and discussed in the following sections.

1. AMOUNT OF RESA STATE AND FEDERAL RESOURCES FLOWING THROUGH RESA

Table 31 gives the amount of resources identified as coming from federal or state resources in the current or recent budgets of nine RESAs. From the data in the table it can be determined that:

- All the RESAs are directly involved in the flow of federal and state funds.
- The amount of federal and state funds in RESA budgets range from $33,750 to $504,604, with an average of $199,105.
- The federal and state funds represent, on the average, 72 percent of the total RESA budget, with a range of 37 percent to 95 percent.

These results are summarized in the first two rows of Table 30.

	Average	Range
Total RESA Budget[1]	$277,361	$45,000 - $631,344
Federal and State Funds[1] in RESA Budget (Percent of Total Budget)	$199,105 (72%)	$33,750 - $504,604 (37% - 95%)
RESA's Federal and State Funds[2] Attributed to RESA Initiative (Percent of Total RESA Federal and State Budget)	$163,137 (74%)	$114,868 - $186,000 (45% - 100%)
RESA Portion[2] of Total Federal and State Funds in the Region	0.9%	0.4% - 2.4%
Total RESA Federal and[1] State Funds as a Percent of Average Administrative Cost	492%	75% - 1121%

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1. Based on budgets from RESAs listed in Table 31.

2. Based on budgets and program reviews for those RESAs listed in Table 31 that were visited.

TABLE 30: RESA EFFECT ON FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO THE REGION

RESA	Total RESA Budget	Funds from Federal and State Sources		
		Total	Percent of Total Budget	Percent of Federal and State Funds Attributed to the RESA
Huntsville, Ala.*	$219,599	$165,172	75%	100%
New Albany, Miss.*	$181,993	$114,868	63%	100%
Canton, N.C.*	$434,323	$414,323	95%	45%
Oak Ridge, Tn.*	$495,230	$181,508	37%	100%
Hazard, Ky.	$631,344	$504,604	80%	***
Piketon, Oh.**	$ 56,084	$ 38,375	68%	***
St. Clairsville, Oh.**	$ 45,000	$ 33,750	75%	***
Cookeville, Tn.	$170,191	$155,861	92%	***
Morgantown, W. Va.	$263,487	$183,487	70%	***

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*RESA visited during this study.

**RESAs in planning year during fiscal year 1976.

***Information on attribution was not collected from these RESAs.

Note: The RESAs in this table are the ones for which we had complete up-to-date budget information. We know of no characteristics they possess which make them, as a set, uncharacteristic of the complete set of RESAs.

TABLE 31: FEDERAL AND STATE
FUNDS IN RESA BUDGETS

The federal and state funds in the RESA budgets represent the upper bound on the increase in the flow of these funds into the region, which can be attributed directly to the programs operated by the RESA.

2. AMOUNT OF STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS ATTRIBUTED TO RESAs

All the funds identified in RESA budgets as coming from federal and state sources clearly do not represent an increase in funds for the region attributable to the RESA. Programs have been identified that would have resulted in federal or state resources being expended in the region without the involvement of the RESAs. For example, the Right to Read program operated in Kentucky has involved a proportional allocation of funds to local education agencies that can be spent either by the LEAs or the RESAs. In some regions, the money was spent individually by the LEAs and did not show up in the RESA budget; in other regions, the converse was true. However, RESAs were not responsible for the "flow" of Right to Read funds in either case and, even though the funds might be in the RESA budget, they do not demonstrate a positive answer to the question of RESA effectiveness in increasing the flow.

Using data from available documentation and interviews with local education authorities, each program supported with federal or state funds in 11 RESAs has been reviewed to determine whether the RESA involvement was essential to the funds being spent in the region. Using the results of that review for the four of the visited RESAs listed in Table 31, it is estimated that on the average, 74 percent of the federal and state funds in the RESA budget would not have been spent in the region without the RESA involvement. The range of federal and state funds attributable to the RESA is from 45 percent to 100 percent of the total state and federal resources in the budgets for those four RESAs. In terms of actual resources, these portions represent an average of $163,137, with a range of $114,868 to $186,000.

3. COMPARISON OF RESA FUNDS WITH FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES ALLOCATED TO THE REGION, AND WITH THE COST OF THE RESA

A sample of five regions was used to compare the portion of federal and state funds spent through a RESA with the total amounts of federal and state monies expended on public education in a region. The RESA portion ranged from 0.4 percent to 2.4 percent of the total federal and state education resources. On the average, those RESAs appear to affect less than 1 percent of an increase in the total federal and state resources already expended in the regions.[1]

Comparing RESA federal and state funds with administration costs (using an estimated average of $45,000 for an administrative cost), yields a ratio of federal and state funds to administrative costs for the RESAs listed in Table 31 of from 75 percent to 1121 percent, with an average of 492 percent. Using the federal and state funds attributable to a RESA calculated for those RESAs in Table 31 which were visited, the range is from 255 percent to 417 percent, with an average of 361 percent. Thus, in those cases examined, the RESAs have effectiveness/cost ratios higher than 1 in the securing of additional federal and state resources.

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[1] The calculations utilized all federal and state resources allocated to LEAs in the regions served by the RESAs in Huntsville, Alabama, New Albany, Mississippi, Canton, North Carolina, and Oak Ridge and Cookeville, Tennessee, as reported in the most recent copy of annual statistical summaries published by the respective state Departments of Education. The state and federal funds reported in the statistical summaries include funds awarded to the LEAs on a per pupil basis, which in most cases can not be affected by regional activities. If one were to exclude the proportion of funds awarded on a formula basis to local school districts, the above percentages would increase significantly. However, data could not readily be obtained for that purpose.

4. PERCEPTIONS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

In our survey of local superintendents, 88 percent indirectly identified the flow of state or federal resources as a major benefit of the RESA. Those superintendents identified the programs funded with those resources as an important benefit of the RESA. However, few RESA directors identified it as a major benefit. Yet in the 11 RESAs visited, all executive directors believed obtaining federal funds was a proper function for RESAs. Several qualified their response with comments such as:

- it is not the primary function, and
- the success rate (number of grants awarded relative to the number of proposals) has been so low, that it is hardly worth the effort.

In at least one RESA (not visited), obtaining federal funds is looked on with disdain and avoided. However, even that RESA has one federal grant that probably would not have been in the region without the RESA.

In summary, budget data from RESAs when combined with a review of the programs supported with federal and state funding and local opinions on the role and achievements of RESAs, indicate that RESAs have been effective in increasing the flow of federal and state funds into the region through the programs they operate. All RESAs for which budget data could be obtained have increased the flow of these funds, and based on the experiences of the

RESAs visited, the RESA involvement was necessary for the region to obtain most of the federal and state funds currrently expended through a RESA.

B. ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING FEDERAL FUNDS FOR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

During interviews with RESA directors concerning services they provide to local school systems, several of them identified instances in which they had provided assistance to an individual local education agency in obtaining federal and state funds for the sole use of that LEA.

Two examples of how RESA directors and staff provide this type of assistance are provided here:

- The most common situation is when the RESA director or a staff member provides assistance in writing or reviewing a proposal to be submitted by an LEA to a federal or state agency. The level of assistance varies from a RESA staff member actually writing a proposal for funds that have been set aside by a state agency for an LEA but which still require a request for funds, to a superintendent informing the executive director of a RESA that a proposal might be submitted and asking for an opinion on the chances of success.
- Using a RESA program to justify additional funds for individual LEAs is a technique for indirectly affecting the flow of federal or state funds that was identified in only a few cases. One RESA has a program which involves the screening and testing of students for special education needs in order to justify the receipt of funds from state or federal agencies to provide special education services. A systematic study of the effectiveness of the RESAs in this role was not pursued, due to the lack of readily available data which would be used to validate the extent and effectiveness of the RESAs in this role.

The role of the RESA in obtaining federal funds is frequently unclear and could not be resolved with much certainty through readily available information. Directors often were uncertain of the effect of their participation in obtaining the federal funds for an LEA and ambiguous on the extent of their involvement. For this reason, the issue was not explored in depth in this study.

VII. POLICY ISSUE NUMBER V: CIRCUMSTANCES, FACTORS AND CONDITIONS THAT INFLUENCE THE IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF A RESA

The fifth policy issue raised by ARC for this study is:

> What circumstances, factors and conditions influence the impact and effectiveness of a RESA's accomplishments relative to the tasks contained in the other policy issues? Are those circumstances controllable or subject to influence by government? How?

As discussed in previous chapters, the other policy issues are concerned with whether RESAs have been able to offer programs with particular objectives. This policy issue is concerned with the circumstances, factors and conditions that influence the capability of RESAs to offer those programs.

We have used two approaches to answer this issue:

(1) RESAs were categorized according to common factors, e.g. type of legal status.[1] Based on common characteristics, RESAs were then compared to determine whether any of those characteristics seemed to affect performance relative to the policy issues raised by ARC.

(2) Analysis of the responses of RESA staff members to this question and questions concerning what has affected their activities and effectiveness.

The following two sections present the results of these analyses, and a third section discusses what ARC or other government agencies might do in light of the results.

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1. Dona M. Kemp, John D. Waller and John W. Scanlon. "Report on Regional Education Service Agencies in Appalachia," Paper 5048-3-02, Washington, D.C., The Urban Institute, August 5, 1976.

A. CROSS COMPARISONS BASED ON RESA ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Specific factors that were taken into consideration to distinguish groups of RESAs which could be compared relative to ARC policy issues are:

- composition of the RESA board,
- type of legal status,
- ability to be one's own fiscal agent,
- source of administrative support, and
- relationship to state agencies, Local Development Districts (LDDs), and institutions of higher education.

These factors were considered because, during the course of this study, they had been raised by ARC staff and by RESA directors as factors that were thought to be significant in the success of a RESA.

The relationship among these factors has been examined relative to the RESA performance in combining funds and achieving benefits identified in the ARC policy questions. The funding issue is addressed first.

1. FACTORS RELATED TO MAGNITUDE OF PERFORMANCE IN COMBINING FUNDS

The previous chapter addressed the performance of RESAs in obtaining funds, utilizing local education resources and attracting federal and state dollars to the regions served. The results were summarized in Tables 30 and 31 of that chapter, which gave budget data for a sample of RESAs.

Those data have been examined relative to various categories and budget sizes. Tables 32, 33 and 34 summarize cases where a pattern could be identified and demonstrate a relationship between budget size, funding source and four organizational factors. Based on the distribution exhibited

RESA	Total RESA Budget	Own Fiscal Agent	Representative of Institution of Higher Education on the RESA Board	Representative of LDD on the RESA Board	Receives Operational Support from State Agency
Cookeville, Tn.	$ 170,191				
New Albany, Miss.	$ 181,993		✓		
Huntsville, Ala.	$ 219,599	✓			
Morgantown, W.Va.	$ 263,487				✓
Canton, N.C.	$ 434,323				✓
Oak Ridge, Tn.	$ 495,230	✓	✓	✓	
Hazard, Ky.	$ 631,344	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cumberland, Md.	$1,038,642	✓	✓	✓	

TABLE 32: RESA BUDGETS FOR VARIOUS RESA ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

RESA	Amount of Local Dollars in RESA Budget	Own Fiscal Agent	Representative of Institution of Higher Education on the RESA Board	Representative of LDD on the RESA Board	Receives Operational Support from State Agency
Cookeville, Tn.	$ 14,330				
Canton, N.C.	$ 20,000				✓
Huntsville, Ala.	$ 54,427	✓			
New Albany, Miss.	$ 63,525		✓	✓	
Morgantown, W.Va.	$ 80,000	✓			✓
Hazard, Ky.	$126,720	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cumberland, Md.	$215,387	✓	✓	✓	
Oak Ridge, Tn.	$313,722	✓	✓		

TABLE 33: LOCAL DOLLARS COMBINED THROUGH RESAs FOR VARIOUS RESA ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

RESA	Amount of Federal and State Dollars in RESA Budget	Own Fiscal Agent	Representative of Institution of Higher Education on the RESA Board	Representative of LDD on the RESA Board	Receives Operational Support from State Agency
New Albany, Miss.	$114,868		✓	✓	
Cookeville, Tn.	$155,861				
Huntsville, Ala.	$165,172	✓			
Oak Ridge, Tn.	$181,508		✓		
Morgantown, W.Va.	$183,487	✓			✓
Canton, N.C.	$414,323				✓
Hazard, Ky.	$504,604	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cumberland, Md.	$820,327	✓	✓	✓	

TABLE 34: FEDERAL AND STATE DOLLARS COMBINED THROUGH RESAs FOR VARIOUS RESA ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

in Table 32, those RESAs that are fiscal agents, have higher education institutions and LDDs represented on the Board of Directors, and receive organizational support from a state agency also tend to have larger total budgets than those RESAs without such organizational characteristics.

Similarly, Table 33 indicates that those RESAs that are fiscal agents and linked to higher education institutions through the Board of Directors tend to have larger amounts of local funding input. When the percentage of the budget coming from local sources is used as a measure of performance in obtaining local resources, the relationship between magnitude and higher education representation on the board is not present. Of the factors considered, only being one's own fiscal agent is associated with a higher percentage of the budget coming from local sources.

Table 34 presents the relationship between the amount of federal and state funds in a budget and the four organizational factors. As with the total budget, those RESAs having the largest amount of federal and state funds are fiscal agents and have representation on the Board of Directors from an LDD and institutions of higher education. However, more diversity exists in the patterns than in the previous tables.

In summary, being a fiscal agent and having links to an LDD and institution of higher education can be associated with RESAs having larger budgets and obtaining more local, state and federal funds. However, information collected in site visits and telephone interviews have not provided evidence to indicate that larger budgets result from the existence of such organizational characteristics. Thus, while some patterns of association may exist relative to magnitude of funding, the reasons for the associations and the implications of them have not been determined.

2. FACTORS RELATED TO PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

In an attempt to identify organizational characteristics related to program performance, analyses were conducted to find cases in which the distribution of RESAs achieving success at one of the policy objectives was significantly different from the distribution of those same RESAs across the characteristic in question. Figures 20, 21 and 22 present the results of several of the cross comparisons. The set of RESAs used in Figure 20 is the complete set of 23 that were studied. In Figures 21 and 22, only the 11 RESAs visited were used.

As can be noted in the three figures below, there are no outstanding patterns of association between the factors examined and a RESA's achievement in selected areas. This result does not imply that the factors examined make no difference in the performance of individual RESAs. For example, the existence of a formal relationship with a local univeristy does not appear to be a necessary condition for a successful RESA cooperative purchase program. However, one RESA has taken advantage of its proximity and relationship to a state university in organizing a cooperative food purchase program through the school's food service department. The program has realized sizeable savings, and the university's participation appears to have been largely responsible for the success. This utilization of such university resources does not appear to be replicated in other RESAs.

While examples can be found to demonstrate that some of the above factors can have an initial effect on the performance of an individual RESA, the cross comparisons indicate that the factors do not have a common

	Number of RESAs	Number of RESAs with Economy of Scale Programs
Institutions of Higher Education Represented on Board	14	5
No Higher Educational Institution on Board	9	4

	Number of RESAs	Number of RESAs with Economy of Scale Programs
Own Fiscal Agent	11	5
Not Own Fiscal Agent	12	4

FIGURE 20: TWO ANALYSES INVOLVING THE ECONOMIES OF SCALE PROGRAMS

	Number of Visited RESAs	Number of RESAs with Threshold Programs	Number of RESAs with Economy/ Efficiency Programs	Number of RESAs with Programs Increasing Quality/ Quantity
Operational Support from State	3	2	2	3
No Operational Support from State	8	3	6	8

FIGURE 21: AN ANALYSIS OF THREE POLICY ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO STATE SUPPORT OF RESA

Type Legal Status	Number of Visited RESAs	Number with Threshold Programs	Number with Economy/ Efficiency Programs	Number with Quality/ Quantity Improvements
Specific Authorizing Legislation	5	2	5	5
Non-Specific Legislation	2	1	2	2
Component of State Legislation	1	1	0	1
None	3	1	1	3

FIGURE 22: AN ANALYSIS OF THREE POLICY ISSUES WITH RESPECT TO RESA LEGAL STATUS

influence on the achievements of RESAs. The influence of each factor is a function of local conditions. Those local conditions identified most frequently by RESA directors and their staffs as important are discussed below.

B. EXPERIENCES OF RESA STAFFS

During site visits and telephone interviews, executive directors and staff members were asked to identify what they have found to be critical factors affecting the performance of their RESA. The responses frequently were in terms of some specific program and were related to a local condition. However, several common themes could be identified which indicate the factors that the RESA staffs consider to have had an influence on RESA achievements. The five major factors that were identified in this manner are:

- flexibility of the program;
- perception of needs by RESA policy makers;
- attitudes of local school officials and their staffs;
- existing service delivery patterns and capabilities; and
- the availability of funds to RESAs.

1. FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAM

An important factor, perhaps the most important factor, which has enabled RESA directors and their staffs to achieve their objectives and to maintain local support is the flexibility of the RESA program. The ARC guidelines for RESAs and the few state guidelines affecting RESAs have been quite unrestrictive, enabling each RESA to develop into an organization reflecting local attitudes. Experiences to date indicate that local school officials must have a positive attitude toward the RESA and feel it is their organization if they are to support it.

2. PERCEPTION OF NEED

The major factor influencing decisions on what programs should be undertaken and whether they are successful is the need for the programs as perceived by the RESA staff and those making policy decisions for the RESA. This situation is not surprising, given the strategy ARC has followed in initiating RESAs and the management strategy the Commission has fostered for them. In particular, as part of the first year planning contracts, surveys were requested to identify and prioritize needs which a RESA might later meet. Follow-on contracts then provided funds for the RESAs to operate and conduct programs that met those needs. In general, funding was not contingent on an ARC perceived need or on operating a specific ARC program.

3. ATTITUDES OF LOCAL SCHOOL AUTHORITIES

The attitudes of local school officials and their staffs toward the RESA are important in determining not only the activities in which the RESAs engage, but often the success RESAs have in implementing those activities. While school officials view a RESA as a provider of services not currently available, they are sometimes reluctant to permit a RESA to operate a program which school districts regularly provide for themselves.

RESA directors have suggested that such officials either fear that the RESA is trying to take over the school districts' responsibilities, or that such actions by the RESA will make an individual school official appear less competent to do his own job. Another school official attitude, which has prevented some RESAs from initiating cooperative purchase programs, is loyalty to local suppliers. That loyalty may be considered more important than the potential cost savings.

Classroom teachers' attitudes toward RESA staff can also play an important part in whether programs involving those teachers are successful, and even in whether or not they are implemented. At least one instance was identified in which teachers initially viewed RESA staff as outsiders telling them how to do their job, and were uncooperative.

4. EXISTING SERVICE DELIVERY PATTERNS AND CAPABILITIES

Frequently programs that RESAs operate are designed to fill a gap in the services provided by another agency, or to make more accessible services provided elsewhere. The relationship a RESA establishes with such agencies is often crucial to the success of a RESA program. If a RESA is filling a gap, such as diagnosing handicapped children, it helps to know of the services available to treat the children and the willingness of other agencies to cooperate with RESA and school staffs.

The capability of an institution of higher education to provide services which can be utilized by a RESA in a program it operates or coordinates has been a factor in the success of such programs.

On the other hand, if a RESA continually initiates programs which duplicate services available elsewhere, it may eventually be viewed as redundant or simply ignored by the very superintendents it has been formed to serve.

4. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

The inability to receive funding directly from a federal or state agency has been identified as a factor limiting the effectiveness of some RESAs. In a few states, education funds cannot be allocated directly to a RESA. Similarly, Local Education Agencies are specified as recipients of funds in some federal program authorizations, and in some states, that specification has been interpreted to prohibit RESAs from receiving funds directly under those authorizations. In such circumstances, the RESA must depend upon an LEA making its funds available to the RESA. While this procedure is utilized in many cases, several RESA directors claimed that it limited their effectiveness. Reasons given for the limitations are: school districts are reluctant to turn over funds to which they have access; if a few LEAs object to the RESA involvement, they can veto the entire effort by withholding their funds; and additional costs are required to coordinate and manage the transfer of funds.

Another component to the funding problem is simply whether or not any funds are available for specific programs. Some RESA directors have identified local needs and designed programs to meet them, only to discover they cannot find the resources to fund the programs.

C. POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO INFLUENCE LOCAL CONDITIONS

In this section, each of the factors discussed in the previous section is presented, and actions suggested to influence or control those factors.

1. FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAM

No specific actions need be taken to maintain the current flexibility that appears to be so crucial to the success of the program. Rather care must be taken to continue to guarantee it. Evidence indicates that neither ARC nor state departments of education should attempt to exert more control over RESAs and their operations. If ARC tries to exert too much control, RESAs will be viewed by local educators as federal, rather than local organizations, and the risk of losing local support will be great. If state departments of education try to exert too much control, RESAs also risk losing the support of local educators who currently think of RESAs, at least in large part, as their organizations.

2. PERCEPTION OF NEED

While ARC or other government agencies may not be able to determine directly what "local perceptions" will or should be, there are techniques available which can be used to affect the manner in which the perceptions are formed, or indirectly influence the perceptions. These techniques include:

- Require or perform periodic needs surveys using methodologies that will obtain the views of a broad spectrum of residents and public service personnel. After the initial survey this is rarely performed, and the RESAs tend to operate within the confines of the original perceptions of needs or the perceptions of those which they deal with routinely as a result of the programs aimed at the original set of needs.

- Influence the composition of those groups involved in formation of the perception of needs. RESA boards of directors and advisory committees become the primary mechanism for reaching decisions on what needs the RESA will serve. In general, these groups are dominated by local education personnel, and reflect their perceptions. In a few instances, actions have been taken to ensure that dominance and the maintenance of independence from other existing institutions. By encouraging representatives of other institutions on the boards and committees, ARC and other government agencies have attempted to involve those institutions in the operation of the RESA. While several RESA directors claim to find the incorporation of these representatives in the decision process useful, their RESA experiences to date do not provide a basis for concluding that it is an effective mechanism for influencing the outcome of the perceived needs or the resulting range of RESA programs.

- Provide information on potential RESA activities. The perception of a need frequently follows the identification of a RESA capability to deal with it. That is, knowledge of potential solutions leads to the realization that there is a problem which the RESA could address. Several RESA directors expressed a desire for information on activities that it would be appropriate for them to consider operating.

3. ATTITUDES OF LOCAL SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Maintaining favorable local attitudes is a function most RESA directors assume for themselves. They do this by involving superintendents in decisions about what programs to offer, what schools, grades or teachers to involve in demonstration programs, by regularly publishing newsletters on RESA activities, and by soliciting assistance from a variety of sources, including business, industry and civic associations for RESA operated or coordinated programs.

ARC has attempted to influence local attitudes by funding specific programs to build local support for and eventual assumption of the program.

Another technique which could be used to affect local attitudes is the dissemination of information on programs tried elsewhere. Information on on successes and failures, on problems and their solutions, and on costs, could be used by RESA directors when trying to gain local support for programs.

4. EXISTING SERVICE DELIVERY PATTERNS AND CAPABILITIES

Techniques used to achieve better cooperation between RESAs and local organizations include having joint committees, cooperative projects, and requirements for the cross review of certain planning documents. Except by requiring joint project review, usually by an LDD, there is probably little ARC or any government agency can do to affect these circumstances. Furthermore, the RESA program provides inconsistent and inconclusive evidence on the effectiveness of formal arrangements between RESAs and other local agencies in influencing RESA program activities. Productive cooperation appears to depend more heavily on personal relationship and a fortuitous match of need, capability and mutual interest.

5. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

This problem was frequently mentioned by RESA directors and their staffs as a serious one, and several partial solutions were suggested. They include:

- Enactment of state legislation that would enable RESAs to act as their own fiscal agents.
- Amending federal legislation in order to allow RESA-like organizations to qualify for funds on an equal basis with local education agencies.
- Provision of ARC demonstration funds for programs operated through RESAs.
- Assistance from ARC in obtaining information on federal monies available to fund RESA programs.
- Individual states could include RESAs in the process of planning how to spend ARC funds.

VIII. POSSIBLE FUTURE MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

As part of this study, ARC requested information on future monitoring and evaluation activities that would be appropriate for the RESA program. This chapter presents what appear to be the alternative monitoring and evaluation courses of action appropriate for ARC to pursue. Three approaches to monitoring and evaluation are described:

A. Maintain current system with some modification

B. Program specific evaluation

C. Periodic assessments for information dissemination purposes

Each alternative is based on specific assumptions concerning ARC objectives relative to RESA and management actions that will be taken on the basis of monitoring or evaluation information. Table 34 summarizes these assumptions, the type of information needs they generate, and the characteristics of the monitoring or evaluation that could meet the needs. The remainder of this chapter discusses these issues for each of the above three approaches to monitoring and evaluation.

A. MODIFICATION OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM

At present, there are four primary types of RESA monitoring and evaluation activity:

- Quarterly and annual reports to ARC from those RESAs receiving ARC funds.
- Evaluations of projects supported by federal funds conducted in compliance with grant requirements.

Evaluation/Monitoring Approach	Management Objectives	Management Actions	Information Needs	Information System
I. Modification of Current Monitoring System	Initiate RESAs that meet locally defined needs for services (but under broad guidelines of what constitutes a RESA).	Negotiate initial contract in response to local proposals.	Organizational and budget information on the RESA.	Minimum amount of data on budget and organizational characteristics of the RESA.
		Negotiate renewals in response to local proposals.	Verification that planned activities are carried out.	Quality control exercised by site visit and use of third party on annual report.
	Fund activities proposed by RESAs.	Determine compliance with contract.	Verify local satisfaction with the RESA's activities.	
II. Program Specific Evaluation	Utilize RESAs to implement specific ARC programs and projects on an experimental and demonstration basis to test utility and motivate further adoption by other RESAs.	Develop model project to be demonstrated.	Monitoring and evaluation results on similar projects or programs--if they exist.	Existing monitoring system and literature searches.
		Fund implementation of the model.	Evidence of capability to implement the model.	
		Provide technical assistance or curtail funding if demonstration project is not implemented and evaluated as planned.	Indicators of progress in carrying out prescribed activities--including evaluation.	Quarterly reports structured to provide pre-agreed-to evidence of occurrence of planned activities.
		Facilitate further implementation through documentation of project for replication, or by funding of replication or continuation of the projects.	Evaluation data to demonstrate achievement of desired results and determine whether the outcome is due to the project.	Experimental design type of evaluation to resolve attribution question and confirm the outcome.
III. Periodic Assessment	Affect RESA operations by dissemination of information on activities and organizational structure of other RESAs.	Organize and distribute information on RESAs and RESA activities.	Descriptive information on RESA activities and organizations.	Annual survey of RESA activities and organizations, with narrative descriptions of major type of activities.
			Evaluations of the effectiveness of RESA programs in selected education areas.	Periodic assessment of RESA impact on selected education activities and methods used to achieve the impact.

TABLE 35: POSSIBLE EVALUATION AND MONITORING APPROACHES FOR ARC

- Routine meetings and reports of some RESA directors with state Departments of Education personnel.

- RESA board of directors' meetings.

In general, there is satisfaction with these approaches. For example, in states where routine meetings are held between RESA and state level personnel and minutes of board meetings are submitted to the state Department of Education, state level personnel claimed that either:

- they believed that the current information arrangements were adequate for their needs, or

- they could not identify additional information needs.

Also, many RESA directors claimed that the most effective means of evaluation for them was feedback from the local superintendents, either individually or through the board of directors. While some indicated an interest in "cost-effectiveness" studies of individual programs they were operating, the overall assessment of their operations seemed to be the local feedback. Since the primary purpose for most of the evaluations of federally supported projects is to satisfy the grant requirement for an evaluation (and those conducted by or for RESAs appear to be acceptable for that purpose), those evaluations are generally viewed as adequate.

Lastly, the ARC program has been able to function for several years with the system of quarterly and annual reports. These reports, augmented by staff site visits and occasional surveys, constitute the current ARC monitoring system.

1. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the ARC RESA program has been to provide the seed money for initiating and developing RESAs that satisfy a broad set of criteria. The guidelines provided to RESAs by ARC allowed great latitude in the activities undertaken and the specific objectives adopted by a RESA. Once a contract is awarded, the primary ARC management objective is to ensure compliance with the terms of the contract.

2. MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

In order to stimulate requests for funds, ARC has used a variety of means to publicize the program. These include: program announcements through LDDs and education agencies, personal visits to LEAs by ARC staff, and magazine articles. Once interest has been expressed, contract negotiations can be initiated to identify specific activities to be undertaken and results to be achieved. The primary ARC management activity is the production and award of the contract. The ARC contract monitor is then responsible for determining that the contract is being fulfilled sufficiently for payments to be made. While disagreements over payment have been encountered, they do not seem to be a result of adverse judgments on contract performance. However, the option to cancel a contract exists and, on at least one occasion, has been used as a threat.

Most ARC grants to RESAs are for a period of 12 to 18 months, with renewal according to a decreasing schedule of funding spread over a five year period. In general, renewal has been somewhat automatic, barring any major program failures and financial problems. However, a new contract is developed each year.

Thus, the two major management activities under the current management system are: negotiate initial and renewal contracts, and monitor contract compliance.

3. INFORMATION NEEDS

As currently managed, the primary ARC information needs involve evidence that contract activities are being implemented. During the contract negotiation process, specific activities to be undertaken are proposed by the RESA. Using common sense or personal experiences, some activities may be rejected as not being appropriate or likely to succeed. Negotiators appear to be concerned with those categories of activity that other RESAs have been unable to implement or which have received a lot of favorable or unfavorable publicity. Once an activity is judged acceptable, the specifics of it will be driven by local conditions and interests. Since the proposed activities tend to differ between RESAs or are operated under different conditions, detailed performance results from previous activities of a similar nature have little value in current contract negotiations.

4. MONITORING/EVALUATION SYSTEM CHARACTERISTICS

When followed through, the current system of requiring quarterly and annual reports on the extent to which contract activities are fulfilled, should meet most of the ARC information needs. Site visits provide a quality control procedure which can be used to verify reported activities through observations and interviews.

Information on the quality, effect or impact of the activities is primarily a matter of the subjective opinion of those providing or verifying the report.

In order to increase the validity of such assessments, many RESAs utilize evaluation teams composed of experts not on the RESA staff. In most cases, the evaluation is based on interviews, observations, and a limited amount of data.

Many of the annual reports focus on the operation of activities or objectives which are so general that the existence of the RESA is almost equivalent to achievement. This situation is more a function of the original contract than of the reporting system.

One problem raised by ARC staff was the lack of uniformity among the reports. Although this is due primarily to the characteristics of the ARC funded RESAs, it could be overcome, in part, by the imposition of some standard structure and set of definitions by ARC. ARC could initiate a system of uniform monitoring in which all quarterly and annual reports adhered to some standards, were all reviewed by one monitor; and were then circulated among all RESA project monitors so that each monitor would be aware of activities and problems in other RESAs.

In an attempt to introduce some uniformity in the reporting information, ARC introduced requirements for information on the number and type of individuals served by the RESA. Due to the variety (in terms of number, amount of service, what constitutes service) of services provided, the information cannot be combined and compared accurately. In order to make comparisons among RESAs or aggregate data from several RESAs, more explicit definitions are required. However, such an undertaking is quickly limited by the enormous variation among RESAs and the activities sponsored.

In order to meet ARC's information system (if it continues to operate the RESA program as it has over the last few years), it appears appropriate to continue the current monitoring approach with the following characteristics:

a. In the contract, incorporate with activity and objective statements: quantatative or qualitative measures (evidence) that will be used to determine success; data or sources of information that will be used to support the measures (or provide the evidence).

b. On an annual basis, use a standard form to collect information on the operation of the RESA itself (e.g.: cost of operation; source of funds; size of staff).

c. Require quarterly reports from the RESA on achievements relative to activity and objective statements in contract. Reports of achievement would use the measures and data sources agreed to in the contract negotiations (see Step 1).

d. Utilize ARC staff for site visits to RESAs to verify and supplement the information provided on quarterly reports.

e. Summary evaluation that: verifies information reported on quarterly reports; summarizes the quarterly reports to assess extent to which activities have been carried out and objectives are met; and include a subjective assessment of the quality of the project, its impact, and reasons for problems and successes relative to the initial projections on activities and objectives.

f. Designate a staff member responsible for comprehensive RESA file, periodic summary reports on all RESAs, and quality control on reports obtained by the staff monitor.

B. PROGRAM SPECIFIC EVALUATIONS

As a result of recent changes in the ARC legislation, ARC has more flexibility in funding demonstration projects and programs than was previously feasible. As a result of these changes, the education division of ARC expects to fund a variety of demonstration and experimental projects through the RESAs. The purpose of such grants will be to test specific projects and, if judged successful, motivate the further adoption of them on a continuing basis independent of ARC funding. The ARC interest is more in the project being demonstrated than in the RESA itself. This contrasts with the previous case where the entire RESA operation was the focus of the monitoring and evaluation. These may be single-site projects or projects which are implemented in several sites simultaneously.

1. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE

The presumed ARC management objective is to demonstrate or experiment with some educational technique considered to be innovative and, potentially, to have continuing utility in the Appalachian education community. If the demonstration project is judged successful, then the management objective is extended to include having the project further implemented by the host agency and other agencies. If the project is considered a failure, then the objective is to learn from that failure so that similar ones can be avoided in the future.

2. MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Four management activities have been distinguished:

- Develop model project to be demonstrated.
- Fund implementation of the model.
- Provide technical assistance or curtail funding if demonstration project is not implemented and evaluated as planned.
- Facilitate further implementation through documentation of project for replication or by funding of replication or continuation of the projects.

These are the actions that would be associated with the initial operation of the project on a test basis, and the utilization of the results to affect future actions relative to the project.

3. INFORMATION NEEDS

Four information needs have been identified to support the four management activities.

a. Monitoring and Evaluation Results on Similar Projects or Programs

At present, the structure of most projects funded by ARC is proposed to the Commission by the potential grantee. In order to assess the expected success of the proposed project, it would be useful to have monitoring and evaluation results on similar projects. If the project is, in fact, a previously untried approach, then such information will not be available. However, if the project is being adopted from some other location--as many RESA projects have been--the evaluation results may be available. Furthermore, for projects adopted from those RESAs being funded by ARC, monitoring information would be available in ARC files.

b. Evidence of Capability of Proponent to Implement the Model

In most cases, the capability of a proponent to implement a proposed project is determined by estimating whether the required resources are available for completion of the project. If there has been a well known failure or success in completing a previous project, this may also be taken into consideration. In general, as ARC develops past performance information on a proponent, it increases the staff's capability to estimate the likelihood of success on future projects. Since the total number of RESAs is small, ARC can most likely maintain a current set of performance information by evaluating selected projects and monitoring those RESAs still supported with RESA program funds.

c. Indicators of Progress in Carrying Out Prescribed Activities--Including the Evaluation of the Project

In order to ensure that the model is being implemented as planned, ARC can be expected to have monitoring responsibility. ARC may elect to give this responsibility to another agency such as a state Department of Education. If deviations are encountered, technical assistance can be arranged or decisions considered on curtailing the grant

d. Evaluation Results for Information Dissemination Purposes

If the objective in funding the demonstration project is to facilitate its implementation in the host site and other sites, then information documenting the activities and results will be required. That is, an evaluation that can be used to support future decisions on replication or continuation is required. Such an evaluation should be of a form that it could be disseminated by ARC or other education agencies to those organizations that could operate or fund the project.

At present, ARC does not appear to have an information dissemination function or mechanism. Consequently, it may be necessary to build into each evaluation grant a procedure for accomplishing this function.

4. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In order to meet the information needs just presented, ARC would need to develop a system for:

- Collecting evaluative information on the proposed demonstration grant and the proponent: A monitoring and evaluation system similar to that currently existing for the RESA program could act as an information source for projects adopted from a RESA still receiving ARC administrative support, and when the proponent is an ARC funded RESA. In other cases a literature search would have to be conducted by the ARC staff or the proponent. Given ARC staff limitations, the better course of action appears to be the literature search being included in the proposal.

- o Monitoring the project and evaluation: Since the projects are to be demonstration grants, extensive variability in project activities and objectives can be anticipated. Consequently, the monitoring measures and data sources will, in most cases, have to be tailored to each project, and it is inappropriate to develop a set of standardized report forms for this type of monitoring. However, for multi-site projects, some common measures of success should be developed and data collected on those measures.

- o Evaluating the project: The evaluation of the project will be the principal mechanism for producing information on its operation and outcome. In order to increase the objectivity of the study, it is common to have a third party evaluator. The evaluator should be retained in sufficient time to develop a study design and obtain concurrence from ARC and the grantee, prior to initiation of the project. Appropriate data could then be collected or maintained as the evaluation proceeded in order to avoid the data gaps routinely encountered in many studies initiated without prior planning. If questions of project impact or the attribution of results to project activities are to be examined, then it may be necessary to utilize experimental designs as part of the evaluation. The cost of operating this type of evaluation system is likely to be in the range of at least $20,000 per project.

C. PERIODIC ASSESSMENTS OF RESAs AND RESA ACTIVITIES

ARC no longer provides general administrative and operational support contracts to 14 of the RESAs initially funded. Also, the area in Appalachia without RESAs is quite limited. Consequently, over the next several years, the ARC role in the general support of RESAs will begin to decrease and eventually phase out. Under such conditions, ARC would no longer have responsibility for monitoring or evaluating a significant portion of the Appalachian RESAs. However, some ARC staff members have indicated an interest in continuing to assess RESA operations for such purposes as: verifying that they continue to serve a useful purpose and identifying activities that are best provided on a regional basis.

1. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVE

The assumed management objective would be to affect operations of a RESA by disseminating information on the activities and organizational structure of other RESAs. At present, ARC performs this function primarily by word of mouth and by negotiating contracts with those RESAs still being supported.

2. MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

The management activities would involve the organization and distribution of information. Since general administrative support would not be provided for most of the RESAs, ARC would not have the leverage to influence directly the use of information produced on the RESAs.

As discussed above, information on individual RESAs could be used to assess the capability of the agency to implement proposed projects. However, there is little evidence to demonstrate that the leverage provided by funding selected projects could be used to influence the other RESA activities.

3. INFORMATION NEEDS

Two types of potentially useful information are:

- descriptive information on RESA activities and organizations, and
- evaluations of the effectiveness of RESA programs in selected areas of education.

The first type of information would provide a status report similar to that developed in this study. It could be used to identify projects that are found to be feasible and desirable for RESAs to operate, and estimate the results in terms of cost savings and increases in services.

The second type of information would provide a basis for supporting decisions to adopt specific projects in the evaluated program areas, and provide information to guide the adoption.

4. INFORMATION SOURCES

The descriptive information on RESA activities and organizations could be obtained through an annual or every other year survey of RESA directors. The information would be based on what was characterized earlier as "authority," and appears an adequate course for the intended user. Furthermore, the documentation of the information would be beyond the ARC staff resources and probably not be assumed by the RESAs, since most would not be receiving general administrative and operational support.

In conducting the survey, ARC could utilize procedures developed in this study. Data could be collected during the year and analyses made similar to the ones we used to answer the policy questions.

This report was prepared by The Urban Institute in compliance with Contract Number 75-188, from the Appalachian Regional Commission. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of The Urban Institute or the Appalachian Regional Commission.

Supporting Analyses for an Assessment of the Appalachian Regional Commission's Regional Education Service Agencies Program

Appendices

by

John D. Waller
Dona M. Kemp
John W. Scanlon

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THE URBAN INSTITUTE
2100 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037

APPENDIX A

List of 23 RESAs Studied

APPENDIX A

The twenty-three RESAs studied in this project are listed below. The eleven RESAs to which site visits were made are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Alabama

*Top of Alabama Regional Education Service Agency
Huntsville, Alabama

Kentucky

*Kentucky Educational Development Region 9
Morehead, Kentucky

Kentucky Educational Development Region 10
Ashland, Kentucky

Kentucky Educational Development Region 11
Prestonburg, Kentucky

Kentucky Educational Development Region 12
Hazard, Kentucky

Kentucky Educational Development Region 13
Barbourville, Kentucky

Maryland

*Regional Education Service Agency of Appalachian
Maryland
Cumberland, Maryland

Mississippi

*Three Rivers Educational Cooperative
New Albany, Mississippi

North Carolina

*Western Regional Education Center
Canton, North Carolina

Northwest Regional Service Agency
North Wilkesboro, North Carolina

Ohio

*Southeastern Ohio Regional Education Service Agency
Athens, Ohio

Ohio Appalachian Cooperative for Educational Services
Mt. Orab, Ohio

South Central Ohio Regional Education Service Agency
Piketon, Ohio

Mid-Eastern Ohio Regional Education Service Agency
St. Clairsville, Ohio

South Carolina

*South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments
Greenville, South Carolina

Tennessee

*Little Tennessee Valley Education Cooperative
Alcoa, Tennessee

Upper Cumberland Education Cooperative
Cookeville, Tennessee

Clinch-Powell Educational Cooperative
Harrogate, Tennessee

Upper East Tennesse Educational Cooperative
Johnson City, Tennessee

*Tennesse Appalachian Education Cooperative
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Virginia

*DILENOWISCO Educational Cooperative
Norton, Virginia

West Virginia

North Central Regional Education Service
Agency - RESA VII
Morgantown, West Virginia

*Curriculum Improvement Center - RESA VIII
Martinsburg, West Virginia

APPENDIX B

Programs Operated by RESAs During 1975-76

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Alabama					
Huntsville	Home Start	Runs center for parents and children; trains Home Start personnel in Southeast.	$ 55,555	Children Families Trainees	33 30 90
	Adult Education	Coordinates, staffs, runs program.	$ 68,818	Adults	3000
	Appalachian Education Satellite Program	Planning for future components.	$ 14,147	Administrators	
	Talent Search	Staffs and runs program.	$ 58,290	Students and adults	200
Kentucky					
Morehead	Cooperative Purchasing	Coordinate program.		Administrators	
	Vocational Education	Coordinate and administer program for training and placing students.		Students	
	Special Education	Consultant provides technical assistance to special education teachers; psychologist identifying and assessing exceptional children.	$ 34,000	Teachers Students	120 80
	Math Consultant	Provide assistance to teachers.		Teachers	
	Adult Basic Education	Provide home training to residents.	$ 70,000	Adults	350
	Inservice	Provide training for teachers.	$ 6,700	Teachers	1200
	Music			Students	
	Talented and Gifted	Sponsor workshops for students and follow-up activities in classroom.		Students	55

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Maryland Cumberland	Career Education	Coordinate curriculum in schools; coordinate with business and industry; run workshops.	$ 84,050	Students Teachers	4900 ---
	Preventive Health	Develop and coordinate program which links school districts with health department.	$173,283	Students Teachers	4500 ---
	Health Education	Plans workshops; coordinates program in schools.	$167,082	Teachers Students	180 5000
	Appalachian Education Satellite Program	Planning for future components.	$ 13,500	Administrators	
	Family Aide Program	Helps organize and conduct training sessions. Coordinates program.	$330,000	Children Teachers Parents	2357 26 950
	Unified Pupil Testing	Coordinates purchase, administration and correcting of tests.		Administrators	
	Management Counselling for Small Business		$ 13,970	Adults	
	Humanities	Historian to write history of the region.	$ 8,000		

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Mississippi New Albany	Special Education	Staff of three locating and testing handicapped children in region.	$ 50,530	Children ages 0-21	3200
	Talented and Gifted	Develop model program by designing and operating program for 36 children.	$ 10,838	High school children	36
	Assessment Center	Coordinate assessment and training of potential administrative personnel for promotion within local school districts.		Teachers and administrators	55
	Needs Assessment Team	Conducts needs surveys for local school systems.		Administrators	7
	Resource Center	Disseminate educational information and materials.		Teachers	1200
	School Board Policy Manual Preparation	Coordinate activities; hire consultant to perform work; assemble manuals.		Administrators	

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
North Carolina Canton	Special Education	Provide resource materials and technical assistance to staff working in special education.	$ 88,000	Teachers	300
	Workshops	Coordinated by RESA.	$ 71,000	Administrators Teachers	47 513
	Scheduling	Coordinate utilization of computer at local college for high school student scheduling.		Administrators	
	Facilitator	Disseminate educational information and assist with adoption of innovative ideas.	$ 50,000	Administrators	
	Media Repair	Operate facility to repair audio-visual equipment.	$ 20,000	Administrators	
	Media Center	Purchase and disseminate audio-visual materials.	$ 50,000	Teachers	
	Occupational Education Exceptional Children Early Childhood Education Reading Food Services Research and Evaluation	Administration of state consultants and coordinators.	$175,000	Administrators Teachers	

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Ohio Athens	Staff Development	Maintain professional library; develop and implement inservice program; conduct needs assessment of instructional personnel.		Teachers and administrators	
	Cooperative Purchasing	Coordinate program.		Administrators	
	Talented and Gifted	Train "talented and gifted" coordinators; provide materials and TAG information.		Coordinators	
	Early Childhood Education	Coordinate development of identification/assessment/placement model for preschool handicapped; provide inservice programs and technical assistance.		Teachers Students	
	Special Education	Provide coordinators for special education teachers in region; provide technical assistance to teachers and principals.		Teachers	
	Media Resource Center			Teachers	

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
South Carolina Greenville	Special Education	RESA-hired consultant runs workshop for teachers on screening for handicapped children.	$ 97,000	Teachers	
	Career Education	RESA-hired consultant runs workshop for teachers on career education.		Teachers	
	Computer Center	RESA establishing the center.		Administrators	
Tennessee Alcoa	Driver Education	Coordinate program using school district teachers.	$ 18,110	Students	2160
	Gifted	Develop model while designing tasks for a few children.	$ 25,652	Students	7
	Psychological Services	Staff of 19 diagnoses and provides services to children.	$165,000	Students	2500
	Safety Education	Coordinate program in local school systems.	$ 1,733	Students	1600
	Special Education	Provide some services.		Children	21
	Reading			Teachers	30

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Tennessee Oak Ridge	Vocational Education	Run vocational education center.	$159,547	Students	400
	Driver Education	Operate program utilizing school system personnel.	$144,771	Students	2000
	Safety Education	Operate motorcycle safety course for local junior high schools.	$ 22,639	Students	600
	Gifted	Conduct demonstration program.	$ 90,943	Students	360
	Materials Center	Run lending library with Title III materials.	$ 7,785	Teachers	150

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Virginia Norton	Early Childhood	Multi-phase program in which RESA staff teaches children and parents.	$320,012	Children Parents	380 300
	Prevocational Education	Provide tutoring and occupational therapy for out-of-school handicapped children.	$ 70,440	Children	35
	Hearing Impaired	Screen children; teach children; assist classroom teachers.	$ 70,000	Students	2000
	Agency on Aging	Runs service agency.	$ 43,000	Adults	600
	Nutrition for Elderly	Provide hot meals and nutrition education for elderly.	$143,000	Adults	350
	Appalachian Education Satellite Program	Planning for future components.	$ 29,000	Administrators	
	Media Services	Delivery of materials previously collected.		Teachers	
	Talented and Gifted	Run workshops for teachers; design programs for students.	$ 84,000	Teachers Students	--- 128

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Visited

RESA	Program	RESA Role	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
West Virginia Martinsburg	Adult Education	Coordinate and administer program.	$102,000	Adults	1256
	Parent Education Training	Run resource center to train parents and early childhood education teachers, and provide staff development and resources.	$ 58,000	Parents Teachers	500
	Early Childhood Education	Run regional demonstration center; develop programs; train teachers and aides; coordinate services of many agencies.	$238,000	Preschool children Teachers	100
	Special Education	Coordinator provides technical assistance, training, coordination to school districts, and helps them find funds.	$ 19,642	Special education, teachers, and coordinators	130
	Psychological Services				
	Teacher Education Center		$ 17,000	Teachers and administrators	1225
	Public Service Education			Adults	300

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Not Visited

RESA	Program	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Kentucky				
Ashland	Reading		Teachers and administrators	100
	Consumer Education		Teachers	All
	Special Workshops		Teachers and administrators	
	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	
Barbourville	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	
	Workshops		Teachers and administrators	
	Special Education		Teachers	150
	Accreditation Review		Administrators	
Hazard	Driver Education	$ 72,000	Students and adults	1300
	Career Education	$404,774	Teachers	1300
	Adult Basic Education	$ 85,270	Adults	140
	Special Education	$ 69,300	Children	12
	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	
	Workshops for Administrators		Administrators	
	Reading		Administrators	

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Not Visited

RESA	Program	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Kentucky (Cont'd.) Prestonburg	Special Education		Teachers	80
	Right to Read		Teachers	
	Inservice		Teachers	1200
North Carolina North Wilkesboro	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	
	Facilitator		Teachers and administrators	1500
	Media Services		Teachers/administrators	----
	Regional Support and Technical Assistance Center		Teachers	
	Occupational Education Reading Exceptional Children Early Childhood Education Research and Evaluation Food Services		Teachers and administrators	

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Not Visited

RESA	Program	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Ohio Mt. Orab	Professional Library Instructional Film Library		Teachers and administrators Teachers	
	Instructional Materials Circulation		Teachers	
	Media Repair		Administrators	
	Planning, Evaluation and Information Dissemination		Teachers and administrators	3600
	Instructional Television		Students/administrators	
	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	
	Staff Development		Teachers	200
Piketon	None--in planning year			
St. Clairsville	None--in planning year			

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Not Visited

RESA	Program	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Tennessee Cookeville	Driver Education	$ 50,191	Students	13,000
	Inservice		Teachers and administrators	2000
	Vocational Education		Students	3300
	Adult Education		Adults	
	Special Education		Administrators	
	Reading	$120,000	Students Teachers	1500 50
Harrogate	Early Childhood		Preschool children	105
	Home Start		Teachers and administrators	180
	Appalachian Education Satellite Program		Administrators	
	Handicapped		Preschool children	86
	Parent Education		Parents	85
	Psychological Services		Students Teachers	250 40
	Guidance		Teachers	56

1975-76 Programs in RESAs Not Visited

RESA	Program	Program Cost	Target Population	Size of Target Population
Tennessee (Cont'd.)				
Johnson City	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	
	Special Education		Administrators	
	Computer Services		Administrators	
	Food Service Program		Administrators	
West Virginia				
Morgantown	Special Education Resource Center	$28,222	Teachers	193
	Developmentally Handicapped	$ 3,265	Teachers	193
	Early Education	$ 533	Teachers	
	Psychological Services	$41,544	Students	
	Regional Film Library	$53,000	Teachers	
	Instructional Television	$27,000	Students/administrators	
	Cooperative Purchasing		Administrators	